NATION

WB protests RG Kar rape ahead of pooja

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BUSINESS

Adani merges step-down subsidiaries with ANIL

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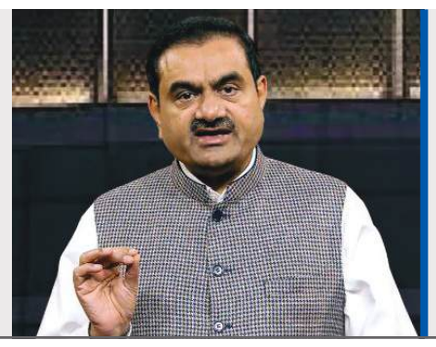

SPORTS

You can't make any mistakes against Aussies: Mandhana

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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JERUSALEM, 2 OCT

FEAR LOOMS AS IRAN & ISRAEL TRADE THREATS

Iran fired the missiles at Nevatim airbase, Tel Nof airbase, Hatzerim Airbase, Mossad headquarters and an Israeli school.

WERE HYPERSONIC MISSILES FIRED?

While reports stated that Fattah-2 Hypersonic missiles were used, Israeli Defence Force claimed that none were used. Here's what hypersonic missile is:

- It boasts a range of 1,500 km, only slightly more than its predecessor (Fattah-I).
- While the missile can accelerate outside the Earth's atmosphere, its aerodynamic control surfaces allow for steering within the atmosphere.
- Capable of significant trajectory changes during flight to evade defence systems.

Israel bans UN Secy Guterres from entering the country

The Middle East moved closer to a long-feared regional war on Wednesday, a day after Iran fired a barrage of missiles at Israel and Israel said it began limited ground incursions into Lebanon targeting the Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Israel said it intercepted many of the missiles, and officials in Washington said US destroyers assisted in Israel's defence. Iran said most of its missiles hit their targets.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to retaliate against Iran. An Iranian commander threatened wider strikes if Israel retaliates.

Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire across the Lebanon border almost daily since 7 October.

Nations on edge

Amid escalating tensions, the US imposed sanctions on an Iranian man and three Chinese firms that Washington believes helped the Houthis manufacture missiles and drones.

Israel barred United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres from entering the state, accusing him of being biased.

This was after Guterres held an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council and said that in just a week the situation in Lebanon had worsened. "I unequivocally condemn the broadening of the Middle East conflict with escalation after escalation. This must stop. We absolutely need a ceasefire," he said

Russia and China also urged restraint in the Middle East with Kremlin saying the situation in the regions is developing into the "most alarming scenario". Russia announced that it will send humanitarian aid to Lebanon.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni called G7 leaders to discuss the crisis.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Paris has "mobilised its military to counter the Iranian threat".

Iran's charge d'affaires in Berlin and Vienna was summoned to the German and Austria Foreign Ministry, where officials condemned Iran.

Spain and South Korea said that their governments will send military planes to evacuate citizens from Lebanon.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Iran launched 200 ballistic missiles towards Israel in its 2nd attack after April. Iran called the mission 'Op, Honest Promise 2'.

WHY THE ATTACK?

Iran said the attacks were in response to Israel's killing of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)'s commander Abbas Nilforoshan.

WHO INTERCEPTED THE MISSILES?

Jordan intercepted some missiles entering its airspace. US also intercepted few.

> **Made a big mistake tonight and it (Iran) will pay for it**
>
> —Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister

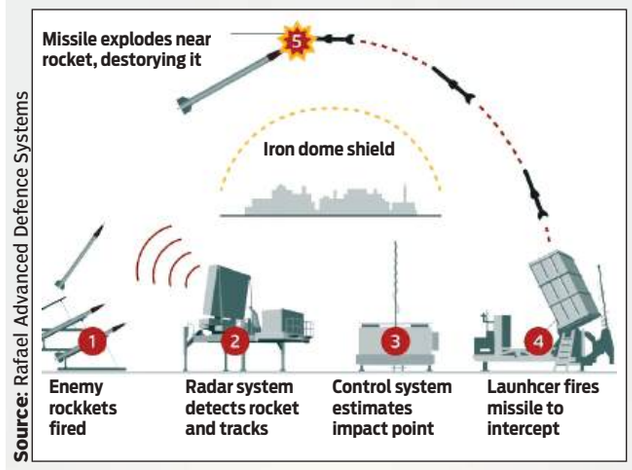
> **With God's help, the blows of the uprising front will become stronger and more painful on the worn and rotting body of the Zionist regime**
>
> —Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran Supreme Leader

8 Israeli soldiers killed

The Israeli military says eight soldiers were killed in combat in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah said they detonated an explosive device as Israeli troops tried to cross deeper into Lebanon toward the southern village of Yaroun on Wednesday. The Lebanese army says Israeli forces breached approximately 400m (yards) into Lebanese territory on Wednesday and then withdrew "after a short period". —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5 & 6


Missile explodes near rocket, destorying it
Iron dome shield
1 Enemy rockkets fired
2 Radar system detects rocket and tracks
3 Control system estimates impact point
4 Launhcer fires missile to intercept
5

Source: Rafael Advanced Defence Systems

HOW WERE MISSILES INTERCEPTED?

Israel has several air defence systems to intercept incoming missiles. Here are Israel's air defence systems:

- **IRON DOME:** It provides city site coverage against rockets ranging between 4km and 70km.
- **DAVID'S SLING:** It destroys cruise missiles and medium-range and long-range ballistic missiles ranging between 40km & 300km.
- **ARROW 2 & ARROW 3:** It defends against medium-range and long-range ballistic missiles anywhere up to 2,400km.
- **IRON BEAM:** Israel is developing a new system to intercept incoming threats with laser technology. Israel has said this system will be a game changer because it would be much cheaper to operate.

WHAT COULD BE ISRAEL'S NEXT TARGET?

IRAN'S OIL PRODUCTION FACILITIES: Crude oil prices spiked after the attack on Tuesday. Brent crude oil continued to climb by over 1% during the Asian session on Wednesday, reaching $74.56 per barrel. India is highly dependent on Middle Eastern oil, so any disruption in supply could seriously mess with the country's energy security. Iran holds 10% oil and 15% of the world's proven gas resources.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR FACILITY: Among the critical installations is the Natanz uranium enrichment plant, Iran's most prominent nuclear facility, located in Isfahan Province. The region also hosts a uranium conversion facility in Zardanjan, in the southeast.

WHAT WILL ISRAEL DO NEXT?

According to Axios report, the Israeli security cabinet convened at an underground government bunker in Jerusalem, on Wednesday. Israel wants to coordinate with the US about the response to the Iranian attack. Iran has warned Israel against responding to its attack, threatening to launch further missiles.

INDIA ASKS ITS CITIZENS TO STAY VIGILANT

In the wake of the escalating tensions in West Asia, India on Wednesday advised its citizens to avoid all non-essential travel to Iran. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also urged the Indian nationals presently residing in Iran to remain vigilant and stay in contact with the Indian Embassy in Tehran.

ICC WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

WORLD CUP POINTER

The women in Blue are all ready to dethrone Australia in the Women's T20 World Cup. In the batting department, the onus will be on openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana while Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh will be expected to hit the sixes in the middle and death overs.

TO GET A CLOSER LOOK, PLEASE CHECK PAGES 8 & 9.

PHOTO: PTI

3 killed as helicopter crashes in Pune

PUNE, 2 OCT

Two ex-IAF pilots and an engineer were killed after a helicopter belonging to a private aviation company crashed and caught fire near Pune city on Wednesday morning, police said. The deceased were identified as pilot Paramjeet Singh, 62, co-pilot GK Pillai, 57, both retired from the Indian Air Force; and aircraft maintenance engineer Pritam Kumar Bhardwaj, 53, police said. After the crash, the chopper caught fire, police said, adding that fire tenders and water tankers were rushed to spot. —*PTI*

Non-bailable warrant against MUDA 'scam' complainant

MYSURU, 2 OCT

A Mysuru Court has issued a non-bailable warrant against social activist Snehamayi Krishna, the complainant in the alleged (Mysuru Urban Development Authority) MUDA land 'scam', for failing to appear in a cheque bounce case.

Krishna was unable to attend the court on Tuesday as he had to appear before the Lokayukta police following a notice issued to him by the investigation officers probing the MUDA site allotment case against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others, sources close to him said.

The Lokayukta police had booked Siddaramaiah, his wife Parvathi and two others in the MUDA land allotment case on the directions of a special court based on Krishna's petition.

A team of Lokayukta police probing the case on Tuesday surveyed the land, in lieu of which 14 sites were "illegally" allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in Mysuru. —*PTI*

Flag in 1 hand, CM's shoe in another

After a purported video of a Congress worker taking off shoes from the feet of the Karnataka Chief Minister even while holding a tri-colour in hand surfaced online, BJP State President BY Vijayendra on Wednesday urged Siddaramaiah and the ruling party to apologise to the people for "insulting" the country and the national flag. In the video, another man present at the spot was seen taking away the flag from the party worker's hands as he was removing Siddaramaiah's shoes. "The fact that the Congressmen, who have worshiped slavery, have seen the national flag as a symbol of slavery on Gandhi Jayanthi, and that the Chief Minister himself has displayed the flag without objecting to promote it, is an insult to the nation and national flag," Vijayendra said. —*PTI*

K'taka govt schools to get free electricity

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

The Karnataka government on Wednesday launched a scheme providing free electricity to government primary and high schools across the State. School headmasters are required to register their school's electricity connection details via the Seva Sindhu portal, facilitated by the Directorate of Electronic Civil Service Delivery (EDCS).

In a significant move, Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company / Electricity Supply Company Limited (ESCOM), in collaboration with the Education Department, will ensure schools have reliable access to electricity without incurring additional expenses. The initiative aims to foster an improved learning environment for students across the State.

The scheme, which was initially proposed in December 2023 and June 2024, has now been officially rolled out, with the goal of benefiting hundreds of schools across the state.

To register, headmasters must visit the official School Education Department website and click on the designated link to submit their school's electricity details. This action redirects them to the Seva Sindhu portal, where they are required to enter the school's U-DISE number. Following which, the school's name, address, and the principal's mobile number will be displayed. After confirming these details, an OTP will be sent to the headmaster's registered mobile number, which must be entered to proceed.

Headmasters are also required to select their respective Electricity Supply Company Limited (ESCOM) and accurately input the account number from the school's electricity bill. Once verified, they must confirm the details, complete a captcha, and submit the application. Schools are advised to print and securely store the acknowledgment for future reference. The deadline for registration is 10 October. —*Salar News*

Narendra Modi PHOTO: PTI

PM: AMRUT 2.0 launched on 10 yrs of Swachh Bharat

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Mission Amrit under AMRUT 2.0 on 10th anniversary of Swachh Bharat Mission project.

Modi said that under Mission Amrit, several cities will get water and sewage treatment plants to make cities cleaner across the country.

Under AMRUT and AMRUT 2.0, a total Rs 6,800 crore will be spent to enhance urban water and sewage systems in the cities. "When people talk about 21st-century India even after 1,000 years, they will definitely remember the Swachh Bharat Mission," Modi said, emphasising the legacy of the cleanliness campaign. —*PTI*

GANDHI JAYANTHI

Girls celebrate Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Wednesday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

CARNIVAL OF SORTS

Palace city of Mysuru gears up for Dasara

MYSURU, 2 OCT

It is that time of a year again, when this palace city gets decked up for annual 10 day long celebrations, playing host to a plethora of religious and cultural events, to keep up the traditions of celebrating Dasara or Navaratri festival that began in 1610.

Celebrated as ''Nada Habba'' (State festival), the festivities will be a grand affair this year depicting Karnataka's rich culture and traditions, coupled with reminiscence of royal pomp and glory.

Renowned writer and scholar Hampa Nagarajaiah will be inaugurating the festivities during the auspicious "Vrushchika Lagna" between 9.15am and 9.45am on 3 October, by showering flowers on the idol of goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru and its royals, amid chanting of vedic hymns, at the premises of Chamundeshwari temple atop the Chamundi Hills.

The 10-days event, like every year, is likely to showcase Karnataka's cultural heritage resplendent. —*PTI*

Amid MUDA row, CM quotes Gandhi

He says 'court of conscience' above all courts

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who is facing Lokayukta and ED probes on MUDA 'scam', on Wednesday quoted Mahatma Gandhi, who said the "court of conscience" was above all courts.

He said Gandhi might have been killed, but his ideals cannot be killed; truth and non-violence cannot be killed.

Addressing the Gandhi Jayanti event organised by the 'Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi', he said, "So all of us should try to conduct ourselves in accordance with our conscience, irrespective whether others like it or not, whether they oppose or appreciate, but we should try to work according to our conscience."

The caste system cannot be eradicated easily, he said, adding, Gandhi fought against caste system and untouchability, but untouchability is still there in many places. Siddarmaiah also remembered former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose birth anniversary was also observed on Wednesday. Congress government on Wednesday also celebrated the completion of 100 years of Mahatma Gandhi's participation in the Belagavi city AICC convention from where he launched the freedom struggle against the British. Meanwhile, Congress is planning to invite former US president Barack Obama to an event scheduled in December in Belagavi, to mark the centenary celebration of Mahatma Gandhi taking over as the President of the Indian National Congress session. *—PTI*

Clockwise from left: CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his birthday, in Bengaluru, on Wednesday; People take part in a march organised on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanthi; Shivakumar showers flower petals on Gandhi statue; Shivakumar with Congress leader and AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan; (Below) Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy participates in a cleanliness drive as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan at HMT Limited premises ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Interfaith prayer held in Mysuru

An interfaith prayer meeting, bringing together leaders and representatives from various religious communities, was held at Town Hall on Wednesday to commemorate Gandhi Jayanthi.The event honoured Mahatma Gandhi's legacy of peace, non-violence, and communal harmony. Leaders from Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, and Muslim communities participated, emphasising the teachings of their respective holy texts, including Bhagavad Gita and Quran. *—Salar News*

Sometimes everyone may not get justice from the courts, but I can clearly say that, as Gandhiji said, the courts we see cannot be above this court of conscience

-Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

This walk is not only a tribute to Gandhiji but a reminder of his ideals, which remain relevant today. It is vital to pass these values to the next generation

-DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

Satyagraha initiated by Gandhiji inspires us as symbol of non-violence. Participated in the 'Gandhi Walk', marking 100 yrs since he led the historic Belgavi Congress session

-Mansoor Ali Khan, Cong AICC Secretary

Bapu's day done with 1km walk

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Bengaluru marked the 155th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi with various events celebrating the Father of the Nation's legacy, emphasizing peace, unity, and cleanliness. The day's events included the "Gandhi Walk," which is a 1 km walk that was led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, followed by Swachhata (cleanliness) initiatives.

The walk began at 9am near Gandhi Bhavan on Kumarakrupa Road, where floral tributes were offered at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. The procession, which was attended by several state officials, students, and the public, moved through Sivananda Circle, Race Course Circle, and Basaveshwara Circle before culminating at the Gandhi statue near Vidhana Soudha.

Speaking to **Salar News** one of the participants, Ananya R, a member of Centre for Environment and Sustainable Growth (CESG), an environmental NGO, said "Walking alongside the Chief Minister, motivated me to think about how we can contribute to society, especially through maintaining cleanliness. Cleanliness is not just an event for a day but a responsibility we all share. We must work together to keep our city clean and beautiful."

After the walk, Siddaramaiah presided over the Swachhta Andolan Pledge Ceremony at the Banquet Hall of Vidhana Soudha. More than 800 students and government officials took part in it, while over 1 lakh students from schools and colleges across Bengaluru participated online.

Meanwhile, the Rail Wheel Factory (RWF) in Yelahanka launched its own Swachhata initiatives. RWF General Manager R. Rajagopal led a Swachhata Pledge ceremony *—Salar News*

State to host 30 years of Panchayat Raj conference

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Karnataka is set to commemorate three decades of the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 with the National Swaraj Conference scheduled for 13 and 14 November, officials said on Wednesday. This initiative aims to honor Mahatma Gandhi's vision of village self-governance, encapsulated in his belief that "India's heart lies in the villages," as stated by the Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Priyank Kharge. State will organise programme at the national level such as seminars, round table councils, workshops and dialogues. Discussions will be organised to review the progress of the Panchayat system in Karnataka for 30 years. *—PTI*

City chess player given ₹10L over quota denial

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Karnataka High Court has ordered the State to pay Rs 10 lakh in compensation to Sanjana Raghunath, an international chess player, after she was denied an MBBS seat under the sports quota despite being eligible. A City resident and participant in the 2018 Asia Youth Chess Championship, she was wrongly placed in the P-5 category of the sports quota classification instead of the more prestigious P-1 in violation of rules, her legal counsel submitted.

The division bench, headed by Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Arvind, ruled that this misclassification violated the rules governing the sports quota.

Sanjana, who has represented India in multiple national and international chess tournaments, including winning a gold medal at a FIDE Chess Championship, had filed a petition after being denied the seat.

The court further noted that Sanjana had to pay approximately Rs 11 lakh for a seat in a private medical college under the management quota due to the mistake, thereby entitling her to the compensation.

The court directed the state to pay Rs 10 lakh within six weeks as compensation.

The court acknowledged that since Sanjana cannot be admitted in the same academic year or a future one under the government quota, she should be compensated for the financial and career loss she incurred. *—PTI*

Priyank launches KRIDL's new app

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

In a step aimed towards improving the management of departmental funds and project development, Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited (KRIDL) launched a new software application, Gandhi Sakshi Kayaka 2.0.

Also known as the Work Monitoring System, this innovative tool was unveiled by the Minister of Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, and Information Technology, Priyank Kharge, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanthi.

According to an official statement, Gandhi Sakshi Kayaka 2.0 is designed to streamline the sanctioning and utilisation of funds for various projects, ensuring efficient accounting and monitoring of infrastructure works across the state. This initiative underscores KRIDL's commitment to enhancing transparency and effectiveness in rural development efforts.

Information Technology Minister Priyank Kharge ***PHOTO: X***

KRIDL, an undertaking of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka, has been a vital force in construction and infrastructure development across the state for over 51 years.

The statement also listed the key features of Gandhi Sakshi Kayaka 2.0, which includes direct fund deposits into KRIDL's central account streamline financial transactions. Online registration for group leaders and material suppliers facilitates easier procurement access.

"Funds can be transferred from the central account to sub-divisions to support diverse works. Users can upload geotagged photos at different stages of project progress, ensuring transparency and accountability," it said. *—PTI*

City man kills self amid 'pressure' to marry actress

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

A 25-year-old man ended his life in Bengaluru after reportedly facing intense pressure to marry a popular Kannada serial actress, Veena, with whom he was in a live-in relationship.

The couple's relationship, which had already garnered public attention due to its strained condition, took an ugly turn following a party at their residence, where Veena proposed Madan to marry her, which he refused. Witnesses at the gathering revealed that Veena continued to press him on the matter, leading to a tense confrontation.

Family members claim that Veena had resorted to blackmail, including threats of self-harm, to coerce him into the marriage. On 1 October around 8.30 pm, after another fight, Madan excused himself to the washroom. He was later found dead.

A case has been registered at Hulimau Police station.

According to the cops, Madan's family claimed he was concerned about Veena's character and he was allegedly insecure about her associations with other men.

"We are looking into all angles, including the claims of coercion and blackmail. Veena is expected to be questioned soon," a senior police officer from Hulimau Police station told *—Salar News*

PHOTO: X

Flipkart offers ₹1 auto rides in City

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

E-commerce giant Flipkart announced a jaw-dropping offer of auto rides for just Rs 1 in Bengaluru, coinciding with the upcoming Big Billion Days sale. The initiative aims to boost the adoption of their UPI payment method among local commuters. Flipkart has partnered with local auto drivers, allowing passengers to take advantage of the Rs 1 fare by using Flipkart UPI. Commuters simply need to scan a code while making their payment through the app to avail themselves of this offer. The announcement has drawn significant public interest, with crowds flocking to book auto rides at an unbeatable price. Flipkart has also set up stalls in key locations across the city, facilitating bookings during peak hours. *—Salar News*

SHOCKER IN WHITEFIELD

'Frustrated' man who lost job stabs BMTC bus conductor

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

A 23-year-old passenger, who recently lost his job and failed to get employment thereafter, stabbed a City bus conductor after he was asked to move away from the door of the vehicle for safety reasons, police said on Wednesday.

The video of the incident, which happened in Whitefield on Tuesday, went viral on social media.

The accused, Harsha Sinha, a native of Jharkhand, was fired 20 days ago by the business process outsourcing firm where he was employed, they said.

He was allegedly frustrated as he was unemployed since the last about three weeks.

According to police, the incident occurred near ITPL bus

PHOTO: X

stop when the 45-year-old conductor of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus, Yogesh asked Sinha to move away from the footboard for safety as he was interrupting boarding and de-boarding of passengers.

This led to a verbal duel between the duo and Sinha allegedly pulled out a knife from his bag and stabbed the conductor.

The accused then allegedly tried to threaten other passengers forcing them to vacate the bus.

The bus driver, Siddalingaswamy locked the door and jumped out, leaving Sinha inside.

In the purported video of the incident, passengers can be seen running out of the bus in fear after being threatened by Sinha, who also broke window glasses of the vehicle.

"The bus conductor was admitted to a hospital. He sustained two-three stab injuries but is stated to be out of danger now. The accused passenger has been arrested in the attempt to murder case registered against him," a senior police officer said. *—PTI*

Chinese garlic glut in market worries State farmers

MANGALURU/UDUPI, 2 OCT

The Chinese-grown garlic has flooded the tier-two cities and smaller towns and cities in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts, worrying farmers in the region.

On Tuesday, the traders and growers had expressed dismay over the Chinese garlic flooding the markets in Shivamogga.

Following the complaints by the traders, Udupi Municipal Commissioner, B Rayappa has raided a wholesaler and confiscated five quintals of Chinese garlic from the Agricultural Produce & Livestock Market Committee (APMC) yard in Adi Udupi.

He assured the traders that only after ensuring the legitimacy of the Chinese garlic he would release the produce in the market. Traders said while Indian varieties of garlic are priced at Rs 250 per kg, the Chinese garlic is sold at Rs

PHOTO: PTI

50-60 per kg. The customers prefer it as it is bigger and easy to peel and crush.

According to APMC officials in Mangaluru, the Chinese garlic has arrived in the market under a trade licence held by the wholesalers.A bulk trader in the old port area, Mohammad Ishaq told PTI that Chinese garlic makes its appearance in the Indian market every now and then.

Due to the influx of Chinese garlic, the prices of Indian garlic, which is trading at Rs 200-225 per kg, will level off at Rs 175 to 150 per kg, he added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Now, Kangana says Gandhi is not father of nation

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Actor-politician **Kangana Ranaut** courted a new controversy on Wednesday with a social media post about Mahatma Gandhi and former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. The actor, who previously faced backlash for her comments on the farmers' protests, paid homage to Shastri on his 120th birth anniversary through a post that appeared to downplay Gandhi's stature as the Father of the Nation. "Desh ke pita nahi, desh ke to lal hote hai. Dhanye hai Bharat ma ke ye lal ('The country does not have fathers; it has sons. Blessed are these sons of Mother India)" Ranaut wrote on her Instagram Stories. In a follow-up post, the actor credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for carrying forward Gandhi's legacy on cleanliness in the country. The post on Shastri and Gandhi has led to yet another row for the BJP MP from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, with Congress leader Supriya Shrinate criticising Ranaut for her "lewd jibe" at Gandhi. *—PTI*

Hurriyat Head Farooq files plea against 'house arrest'

SRINAGAR, 2 OCT

Hurriyat Conference Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has filed a petition in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court challenging his "house arrest", the separatist amalgam said on Wednesday. It said the court is scheduled to hear the petition. While the Hurriyat has claimed that its chairman has been under house detention for one month and his movements are restricted, the J&K administration has maintained that he is a free man but security agencies determine his movements because of security reasons. "The hearing of the case of Mirwaiz's house arrest/illegal detention has been listed on 4 October in High Court. *—PTI*

Farmer's son does not get beautiful girl: M'rashtra MLA

AMARAVATI, 2 OCT

Devendra Bhuyar, an independent MLA from Warud-Morshi in Amravati district, Maharashtra has courted controversy by claiming that a "farmer's son" has to settle for an inferior bride as best-looking girls prefer to marry someone who has a steady job. "If a girl is beautiful, she will not like a person like you and me, but she will opt for a person having a job (while choosing her husband)," he said. "Girls who are at number two," that is, who are somewhat less good-looking, prefer someone who runs a grocery shop or paan kiosk, he said. The children of such marriage too lack good looks, he added. Former Maharashtra women and child development minister Yashomati Thakur slammed Bhuyar for using such language while talking about women.*—PTI*

BRS minister links KTR with divorce of actor Samantha

HYDERABAD, 2 OCT

Attacking senior BRS leader KT Ramarao over his party's targeting her online with 'abuses', Telangana Minister Konda Surekha on Wednesday claimed he was the reason behind the divorce of actors Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya, remarks that drew sharp responses from the actor's family as well as the opposition party. Naga Chaitanya's father and top Telugu actor Nagarjuna strongly condemned the Minister's remarks asking her not to use lives of movie stars who stay away from politics, to criticise her opponents". The BRS slammed her for the "uncouth remarks" and said the matter will be dealt with legally and politically. There was no immediate response from Samantha Ruth Prabhu. *—PTI*

India calls for restrain amid war in W Asia

The comments come a day after Iran fired missiles into Israel after Nasrallah's death

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

In its first reaction to fresh escalation of tensions in West Asia, India on Wednesday called for restraint by all sides and said the conflict must not take a wider regional dimension.

India's comments came a day after Iran fired around 200 missiles into Israel in response to Israel's killing of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah and other commanders of the militant outfit.

New Delhi said it is deeply concerned over the escalating security situation in West Asia and called for addressing all issues through "dialogue and diplomacy".

"We are deeply concerned at the escalation of the security situation in West Asia and reiterate our call for restraint by all concerned and protection of civilians," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

"It is important that the conflict doesn't take a wider regional dimension and we urge that all issues be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy," it said in a statement.

The advisory follows ongoing regional instability caused by Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel, which has triggered retaliatory measures and widespread military engagement between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Sharing a post on X, the Times of Israel reported that the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have issued alerts for residents of two dozen villages in southern Lebanon to evacuate immediately.

"The IDF reported that around 50 rockets were fired from Lebanon at northern Israel earlier today, leading to the deployment of additional forces to support ground operations in the region," another update said. *—PTI*

Protests in J&K over killing of Hezbollah leader Nasrallah

SRINAGAR, 2 OCT

The protests broke out in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district on Wednesday against the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon, officials said. The protests were held in Magam market area and Budgam town of the central Kashmir district on the fourth day of mourning of Nasrallah. Some market places were shut following the protests. The people, including men, women and children, assembled on the main roads -- carrying black flags -- and held protests against the killing, the officials said. The protestors were chanting anti-Israel and anti-US slogans, denouncing Nasrallah's killing in Israeli airstrikes on Saturday, they said. *—PTI*

LADDU ROW

Pawan Kalyan's daughter declares faith at Tirupati temple

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's daughter Palina Anjani Konidela signs the declaration at Tirumala temple **PHOTO: PTI**

TIRUPATI, 2 OCT

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday visited the Tirumala temple here and renounced his 11-day penance (Prayaschitta Deekhsa), which he undertook to atone for the alleged sins of the previous YSRCP government at the hill shrine. He was accompanied by his daughters Aadhya Konidela and Palina Anjani Konidela.

Anjani gave a declaration at Tirumala temple that she has faith in Lord Venkateswara. She is reportedly a non-Hindu and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) - the official custodian of Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati - rules mandate that non-Hindus have to declare their faith in the deity before making a visit to the temple.

The declaration assumes significance as BJP leaders and several Hindu outfits had demanded that YSRCP Chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, a Christian, has to issue a similar declaration before his recent cancelled visit to the temple.

"Palina Anjani Konidela gave the declaration for Srivari (deity) visit in Tirumala. She signed the documents provided by TTD staff. As Palina Anjani is a minor, her father Pawan Kalyan also endorsed the documents," said a Janasena press release.

"Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan who undertook an 11-day penance for the protection of Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) visited Sri Venkateswara Swamy on Wednesday and renounced his penance," said an official press release.

"Deputy Chief Minister and Janasena president Pawan Kalyan had Tirumala Srivari (deity) darshanam (visit) today. Pawan Kalyan took Varahi Declaration book along with him," said a Janasena press release. *—PTI*

Modi unveils projects worth crores in 3 states

RANCHI/GUWAHATI/BHOPAL, 2 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday unveiled development projects worth over Rs 83,700 crore in Jharkhand, reaffirming his government's commitment to the state's progress.

Modi launched the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, which will be implemented at a cost of Rs 79,150 crore, aimed at ensuring comprehensive and holistic development for tribal communities across the country.

"Mahatma Gandhi's vision for tribal development is our asset, he (Mahatma Gandhi) believed that India can develop only when tribal communities will develop. BJP government accords top priority to tribal development and Rs 80,000 crore will be spent on Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan to develop 65,000 tribal villages," he said.

He virtually inaugurated the 'Lal Tipara Gaushala' with Bio-CNG plant in Gwalior and launched various development projects of Rs 685 crore in Madhya Pradesh. The cow shelter, with the Bio-CNG plant that can produce three tonnes of natural gas per day using 100 tonnes of cow dung, has been set up in collaboration with the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), an official said.

Meanwhile, he kick-started the construction of four compressed bio-gas (CBG) plants by Oil India Ltd in Assam. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes part in a cleanliness drive at a school on the ocassion of Gandhi Jayanthi, in New Delhi, Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

BJP promises never fulfilled: Kharge to PM

CHANDIGARH, 2 OCT

Launching a scathing attack on BJP for failing to fulfil the promises made to people, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday alleged Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an expert in telling lies.

"It is Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri's birth anniversaries today. Mahatma Gandhi taught us truth and non-violence. I don't want to say this, but those in power how much truth and how much lies they speak," said Kharge addressing a poll rally at Badhra in Charkhi Dadri.

"Modi ji toh bharosa todne walo ka bhi sardar hai (Modi is the leader of those who break trust.) His numerous lies, promises, you know about it," he added in the presence of former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik.

The person, who is the Prime Minister for ten years, can he speak a lie. Did former prime ministers Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi say such thing, no one did, he said. Kharge said Modi "promised 2 crore jobs to youth each year". He said BJP is saying that they will give five lakh jobs, whereas they did not fill the over 1.60 lakh vacant posts. *—PTI*

MVA will defeat Mahayuti, says Cong

MUMBAI, 2 OCT

AICC in-charge of Maharashtra Ramesh Chennithala on Wednesday exuded confidence that the Maha Vikas Aghadi will defeat the ruling Mahayuti in the upcoming state assembly polls, which he claimed were being delayed.

The seat-sharing talks with the Maha Vikas Aghadi partners were progressing smoothly and the opposition alliance will unitedly fight the state polls, the Congress leader said, adding there were no differences among the MVA constituents.

The MVA comprises the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) led by Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP). Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly are likely to be held next month. "We will defeat the Mahayuti (comprising the Shiv Sena, BJP and NCP). The question is when will the elections be held," Chennithala told reporters after paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his 155th birth anniversary at Mani Bhavan here. He said the seat-sharing talks are on and will continue for some time. MVA is determined to defeat the "corrupt" Mahayuti government, he said. *—PTI*

UP files 3,200-page chargesheet in Hathras case

HATHRAS, 2 OCT

The police here have filed a 3,200-page chargesheet in a court in connection with the stampede that occurred during the **Narayan Sakar Hari "Bhole Baba"** congregation on 2 July, which claimed 121 lives.

The police have named 11 individuals as accused, including those responsible for securing the event's permit. The court has set 4 October as the date for providing copies of the charge sheet to the accused, defence lawyer AP Singh said. On Tuesday, a physical appearance was made in court for the 10 accused, including main organiser and fund raiser of the event Dev Prakash Madhukar, who were brought from Aligarh District Jail to the Hathras District Court, he said. One of the accused, Manju Yadav, is currently out on bail following orders from the Allahabad High Court.

"The SIT probing the case has filed the charge sheet. A separate judicial inquiry into the matter is ongoing," Singh said. 121 people, died in the stampede after a satsang of Surajpal alias Bhole Baba

PHOTO: X

alias Narayan Sakar Hari on 2 July in Fulrai village in Hathras' Sikandra Rao area.

Government agencies, including police, have blamed the organisers for mismanagement at the event, noting the crowd size exceeded to over 2.50 lakh from the permitted 80,000, even though the lawyer of the 'godman' on Saturday claimed 'some poisonous substance' sprayed by 'some unidentified men' triggered the stampede. Surajpal alias **Narayan Sakar Hari** alias 'Bhole Baba' was not mentioned as accused in the case.

On 3 July, the Uttar Pradesh government had formed a three-member judicial commission headed by a retired high court judge to probe the Hathras tragedy and to look into the possibility of a conspiracy behind the stampede. *—PTI*

ACTIVIST SOMAN WANGCHUK, OTHER LADAKHIS TAKEN TO RAJGHAT BY POLICE

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Climate activist Soman Wangchuk and 170 Ladakhis under police detention for the past two days for violating prohibitory orders have been taken to Rajghat, an officer said on Wednesday.

Wangchuk, who was leading 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', had gone on an indefinite fast after he was detained by the Delhi Police on Monday.

The 'padyatra' was organised by the Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance, has been spearheading an agitation for the last four years for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Wangchuk had begun his journey with 170 Ladakhis from Leh a month ago.

The marchers were detained at several police stations in the outskirts of Delhi on Monday night.

They were detained at the city's Singhu Border while they on their way to Rajghat. *—PTI*

NEW FACES FOR NEW CHANGES?

Bihar polls: Prashant Kishor floats Jan Suraaj Party

PATNA, 2 OCT

Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Wednesday announced the launch of his political outfit Jan Suraaj Party, a much-anticipated move by which he hopes to take the political landscape in Bihar by storm.

Kishor also named Manoj Bharti, a Madhubani-born former Indian Foreign Service Officer, as working president of the party, saying the latter will hold the post till March when organisational polls will be held.

The party was floated exactly two years after Kishor had embarked on a more than 3,000-km-long 'padayatra' of the state, from Champaran where Mahatma Gandhi had launched the first Satyagraha in the country, in a bid to mobilise the people for a "new political alternative" that could cure Bihar of its chronic backwardness. *—PTI*

Jan Suraaj founder Prashant Kishor with supporters during the launch of his political party on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Anvar announces new 'secular' political party amid row

MALAPPURAM, 2 OCT

Dissident MLA PV Anvar on Wednesday said that he will be forming a new political party in Kerala which will contest in all the coming elections in the state.

Anvar, who had won from Nilambur constituency as a Left candidate and with whom the CPI(M) has severed all ties, said that the issues raised by him have become a movement which in turn will turn into a political party.

"So, I will form a new political party. Without a party you cannot contest in elections," he said. He claimed that he has support of lakhs of youngsters in the state and they were his hope.

PV Anvar **PHOTO PTI**

The Nilambur MLA also referred to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's recent reported statements about gold smuggling and hawala cases in Malappuram district and alleged that these were meant to "appease Hindutva communalists and the RSS".

However, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) had clarified on Tuesday that Vijayan never referred to any particular place or region, nor did he use the terms "anti-state" or "anti-national activities" in his reported statements. His statement comes a day after Vijayan, on Tuesday, stated that the ruling CPI(M) in the state opposes both 'majority and minority communalism' and will not compromise with either side.

Anvar has been locking horns with the Left party and Vijayan for the past few weeks on various issues.

On Wednesday, during his press conference, he said that he would go to the people and continuously raise these issues before them. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

45 children fall ill after having meal in Thane school

THANE, 2 OCT

Police have registered an FIR against a private school management after 45 children took ill due to suspected food poisoning following consumption of mid-day meal at the institution near Maharashtra's Thane city, officials said on Wednesday. Initially, 38 students, aged between 8 and 11 years, were admitted to a civic hospital in Kalwa town after they complained of giddiness, nausea, headache and pain in the abdomen after lunch on Tuesday. Seven more children were hospitalised late night, taking the total number of minors admitted to the medical facility to 45, officials said. No arrest has been made so far and a probe is on into the case, the police said. Samples of food served to students have been collected by FDA officials. *—PTI*

Govt sets up panel to probe Badlapur rape encounter

MUMBAI, 2 OCT

The Maharashtra government has formed a Commission of Inquiry for a probe into the killing of Badlapur school sexual assault case Akshay Shinde in an alleged shoot-out by police. The single-member Commission of Inquiry will be headed by the Chief Justice (retired), Allahabad High Court, Dilip Bhosale. The panel will submit its report in three months. Two girls, aged four and five years, were sexually abused by a male attendant inside the toilet of a school at Badlapur in August. Akshay Shinde, the accused, was arrested, but was shot dead by police in an alleged shoot-out on 23 September. The panel will inquire the sequence of events which happened in Thane over the exchange of fire between Akshay and the police escort. *—PTI*

2 gangrape Odisha woman in flat after looting jewels

BHUBANESWAR, 2 OCT

Two burglars allegedly gangraped a woman in her flat here after looting her ornaments at knife-point, police said on Wednesday. Police have detained two people. The attack took place around 2am on Monday in the city's Maitri Vihar area, where the woman was with her two-year-old daughter, police said. Police said the burglars might have accessed the building using bamboo poles. They threated the woman that they would kill her daughter if she shouted for help. The woman, who works for a private company, had moved into the flat only 10 days ago, police added. *—PTI*

Town bids farewell to jawan who died in 1968

SAHARANPUR, 2 OCT

Grandchildren and fellow villagers of Air Force Sepoy Malkhan Singh wait with an anxious joy for his body to arrive here, 56 years after he went missing in Rohtang Pass where his plane crashed. According to Additional SP Sagar Jain, preparations are in full swing in Fatehpur village in the Nanauta area, where Malkhan Singh's body is likely to reach Wednesday evening or Thursday. His younger brother, Isam Singh, 68, said Malkhan Singh joined the Air Force when he was 20. He died in the crash three years later, leaving behind his wife Sheela Devi and son Ram Prasad, who was 18 months old. Malkhan was found by a joint team of Dogra Scouts of the Indian Army and Tiranga Mountain Rescue. The twin-engine turboprop transport aircraft, carrying 102 people, had gone missing on 7 February 1968. *—PTI*

WB protests RG Kar rape ahead of pooja

Health services hit in Kolkata as doc's resume total cease-work amid unfulfilled demands

KOLKATA, 2 OCT

Protesting the rape and murder of RG Kar hospital doctor, night-long demonstrations were held across West Bengal on the auspicious occasion of Mahalaya, which marks the beginning of the festive season with Durga Pooja barely six days away.

Meanwhile, healthcare services were affected in West Bengal as junior doctors continued their cease work on Wednesday over a host of demands, including proper security at state-run hospitals in the wake of the rape and murder and of their colleague.

The junior doctors went on to cease work after the body of their colleague was found at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on 9 August. They partially returned to work on 21 September after 42 days, resuming essential services after the government promised to address most of their concerns.

However, alleging that the government did not fulfil its promises, the doctors went on to cease work on Tuesday.

While in Kolkata, the demonstrators floated lamps in the rivers and prayed for the medic's soul, in Coochbehar, a march was held in the early hours as part of the protest, termed 'Abhaya'r Tarpan'.

Hindus perform the ritual of 'tarpan' on Mahalaya in remembrance of their forefathers.

A large number of women took part in the protests that were held at Ruby Crossing, outside the Academy of Fine Arts, Jadavpur 8B Stand, Shyambazar, Thakurpukur, VIP Road, and Dumdum Park in Kolkata. Similar gatherings were held in Coochbehar, Malda, Canning and Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas, Sodpur and Barasat in North 24 Parganas, and Uttarpara in Hooghly, among other districts.

"Our peaceful protests demanding justice for Abhaya (the victim's symbolic name) will continue during Devi Paksha on all four days of the festival," said writer-activist Satabdi Das, who took part in the demonstration at Renuchhaya Mancha near the Academy of Fine Arts.

At Haridevpur in south Kolkata, a scuffle broke out between the protesters and another group over raising slogans and the obstruction of the main road.

The protesters later filed a complaint with the police, alleging that TMC supporters had assaulted them. *—PTI*

People take part in a rally on 'Mahalaya' to demand justice for the sexual assault and murder of a doctor in Kolkata, Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

> Many people are asking why are we indulging in festivities? They should understand that Bengal's culture is rich with celebrations throughout the year. We believe in taking everyone along during these celebrations
> -Mamata Banerjee, WB Chief Minister

WB CM Mamata Banerjee during inauguration of the Babubagan community Durga Pooja pandal on 'Mahalaya', in Kolkata *PHOTO: PTI*

Blinken meets EAM, says India & US will address regional issues

WASHINGTON, 2 OCT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his US counterpart Antony Blinken met in Washington DC and discussed working together to address regional and global challenges.

Jaishankar, on his first visit to the US capital since the third Modi government took office, met Blinken on Tuesday at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the US State Department.

Jaishankar, meanwhile, said, " We followed up on the Delaware bilateral and the QUAD meetings. Our discussions also covered deepening bilateral cooperation, the situation in West Asia, recent developments in the Indian subcontinent, the Indo-Pacific and Ukraine."

He was referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent bilateral meeting with US President Joe Biden.

Biden hosted Modi at his Delaware residence for a bilateral meeting on 21 September. They were later joined by leaders from Australia and Japan for the QUAD Leaders' Summit in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Blinken noted Modi's August visit to Kyiv and reiterated the importance of a just and lasting peace for Ukraine," he said and added that plans to expand collaboration on clean energy initiatives to address the global climate crisis were also discussed.

Welcoming Jaishankar earlier, US Secretary of State Blinken said the warmth of Biden and Modi's recent meeting and the ambition in the relationship were at a level never seen before. Earlier in the day, Jaishankar had taken part in a discussion at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a top American think tank. *—PTI*

EAM Jaishankar with US' Antony Blinken in Washington *PHOTO: PTI*

Life hit as Imphal calls for bandh over kidnappings

IMPHAL, 2 OCT

Normal life was affected in the five Imphal Valley districts in Manipur on Wednesday due to a shutdown called by Meitei group Joint Action Committee (JAC) over the kidnapping of two youths.

Shops and other commercial establishments remained closed, and vehicles remained off the roads as demonstrators blocked the streets in Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Kakching and Thoubal districts.

In Thoubal, where the shutdown started in the early hours of Tuesday, women blocked the NH 102 at Mela Ground, Wangjing, Yairipok and Khangabok, police said.

Near the Mela Ground, women demonstrated in the middle of the road, while young men burnt tyres to prevent movement of vehicles.

The shutdown was strongly enforced at Khurai and Lamlong in Imphal East district.

JAC convenor L Subol said, "The agitation will continue till the youths are released."

Three young men hailing from Thoubal district were allegedly kidnapped in Kangpokpi last week. Later, one of them was rescued, but the other two remain missing.

Accompanied by two friends, N Johnson Singh went to appear for a recruitment test at New Keithelmanbi in Manipur's Imphal West district, but took a wrong turn, ending up in Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district, according to police.

Gunfight in Ukhrul over land, Sec 144 imposed

Prohibitory orders were imposed in Manipur's Ukhrul town after a gunfight broke out between two groups on Wednesday over cleaning a plot of land as part of 'Swachhata Abhiyan', officials said.

Both sides belong to the Naga community but two different villages, and lay claim to the land, they said.

Some people were also injured in the gunfight, and the Assam Rifles were deployed to control the situation, police said. Meanwhile, unidentified men shot dead a self-styled town commander of a proscribed militant outfit near Leishang village in Manipur's Churachandpur district, police said on Wednesday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: RANTHAMBORE

Seize illegal properties in Ranthambore: HC

JAIPUR, 2 OCT

Rajasthan High Court directed the forest authorities to seize and attach illegal properties and constructions in the critical tiger habitat and forest area in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Sawai Madhopur district.

High Court also instructed the police and district administration to cooperate with the forest officials and directed the Director General of Police DGP to supervise the matter. The court of Justice Sameer Jain on Tuesday expressed concern over the ongoing construction and encroachment in the critical tiger habitat in Ranthambore.

Ranthambore, one of the biggest and most renowned national parks in northern India, is home to over 70 big cats. *—PTI*

Cops quiz Govinda over carrying loaded revolver

MUMBAI, 2 OCT

Mumbai crime branch personnel met actor Govinda, who sustained leg injuries after his revolver accidentally went off, and enquired why he was carrying a loaded gun at his home, officials said on Wednesday.

While the local police have been conducting an investigation, the Mumbai crime branch has also initiated a parallel enquiry into the incident.

No one has lodged any complaint in this matter so far, police said.

The accident took place on Tuesday at the Mumbai residence of the 60-year-old actor and he is currently recuperating at a private hospital here.

A crime branch team led by senior police inspector Daya Nayak visited the hospital on Tuesday and spoke to the actor about the incident, an official said.

Govinda was alone when the incident took place at his residence in the early hours of Tuesday, he said.

The actor has a licensed revolver of Webley company and the bullet hit him near his left knee, the official said.

The revolver, which is an old one, was not locked and got misfired, he said.

The actor's revolver has been seized by police officials for further probe, an official earlier said.

After the incident, Govinda, a favourite with audiences for his impeccable comic timing and dancing

Govinda is fine and will be moved to a normal ward on Wednesday, said his wife Sunita Ahuja. *—PTI*

Govinda *PHOTO: PTI*

SC VERDICT ON DISCRIMINATION IN JAILS TODAY

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce its verdict on Thursday on a plea which has alleged that prison manuals of some states in the country encourage caste-based discrimination.

The apex court had in January this year sought responses from the Centre and 11 states, including Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, on the plea.

It had taken note of the submissions of the petitioner's counsel that jail manuals of these states discriminate in the allocation of work inside their prisons and inmates' caste determines the places where they are lodged.

The plea referred to the Kerala Prison Rules and said they lay down a distinction between a habitual and a re-convicted convict, holding that those who are by habit a robber, house breaker, dacoit or thief should be classified and separated from other convicts. *—PTI*

THE RESCUER RESCUED

Locals assist in the rescue after Indian Air Force helicopter made an emergency landing while dropping air-dropping relief material in a flood-hit area, after it developed a snag in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

BIGGEST SEIZE EVER

Cocaine worth Rs 2,000 crore seized in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Delhi Police has made one of the biggest drug busts ever seen in the city, seizing over 560 kg of cocaine estimated to be worth around Rs 2,000 crore, officials said here.

A Delhi Police Special Cell team nabbed four people from South Delhi's Mehrauli.

The officials said those arrested had planned to sell the cocaine in Delhi and the National Capital Region.

They said the Special Cell team had been working for over two months based on a tip-off which led to the bust just before the festive season.

The drug bust comes just days after two other Afghan nationals were arrested for allegedly running a syndicate. The two were caught during a raid on Saturday in Tilak Nagar. Cops recovered 400 grams of heroin and 160 grams of cocaine from the possession of the two accused - Hashimi Mohammad Waris and Abdul Nayib.

The drug bust comes just days after two other Afghan nationals were arrested for allegedly running a syndicate *PHOTO: PTI*

Waris has been living in India on refugee status since January 2020. His family is in Afghanistan. After arriving in India, he worked in a chemist shop as a helper in Vikaspuri. He entered into the drugs business when his friend contacted him and asked him to collect the consignments from different people in Delhi and NCR. He would further deliver them to the receivers. He used to get $100 for each delivery, police said.

According to the police, Nayib is also an Afghan national and he came to India in January 2020 along with his father. He is a registered refugee. His whole family except his father lives in Afghanistan. Nayib met Waris in a chemist's shop in Vikaspuri. *—PTI*

UP to pay Dalit student's IIT fee; youth studied for 18 hrs

LUCKNOW, 2 OCT

Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday said it will help Dalit student Atul Kumar, a resident of Muzaffarnagar, to get admission in IIT Dhanbad and its social welfare department will bear the entire fee through scholarship.

Atul Kumar, the son of daily wage labourer Rajendra Kumar, could not secure admission in IIT Dhanbad stopped due to non-payment of fees.

Atul, a resident of Titoda village of Khatauli tehsil of Muzaffarnagar district, had performed well in the IIT JEE exam and got a seat in the Electronics Engineering branch, but his admission got stuck due to non-payment of fees by 24 June. The family approached Supreme Court after making all efforts. After the intervention of the Supreme Court and the matter coming to the notice of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the government decided to provide full help to the student.

Atul studied for 18 hours a day, taking breaks only for food and sleep, as he prepared for the much-dreaded IIT entrance.

Despite the gruelling schedule, the 18-year-old, who almost didn't go to IIT despite cracking the test, advises against letting the pressure get to the head. *—PTI*

Atul Kumar *PHOTO: PTI*

OKTOBERFEST 2024

Visitors throng the annual Oktoberfest, the world's largest beer festival in Munich, Germany. It began on 21 September and will continue till 6 October. The travel carnival is known for its food, music, and beer tents, attracting a massive audience every year. Oktoberfest was originated in 1810 when Crown Prince Ludwig celebrated his marriage.
PHOTO: OKTOBERFEST.DE

War mode on: Why is Iran taking risk with Israel?

Visiting With Iran's firing of some 180 ballistic missiles at Israel overnight, the Middle East is again on the brink of what would be a costly, ruinous regional war. Israel and its ally, the United States, shot down most of the missiles.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately vowed to retaliate for the attack. He called it a "big mistake" that Iran will "pay for".

The strike marked a dramatic shift in Iran's calculations following weeks of escalating Israeli attacks on the leaders of its proxy groups, Hamas and Hezbollah, and their forces in both Gaza and Lebanon.

Iran has traditionally outsourced its fighting to Hezbollah and Hamas. It has been very much concerned about getting dragged into direct confrontation with Israel because of the ramifications for the ruling regime – namely the possible internal dissent and chaos that war with Israel might generate.

When Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed in Tehran in late July, Iran's leaders said they would respond appropriately. They basically left it to Hezbollah to do that.

And as Israel intensified its military campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon in recent weeks, another Iranian proxy group, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, claimed to have retaliated by launching missiles and drones at Israeli cities and US destroyers in the Red Sea. Israel responded with airstrikes on Yemen.

In this context, from the Iranian point of view, it looked like Iran was just sitting on the fence and not performing its leadership role in challenging Israel. So, to a large extent, Iran had to exert its role as the leader of the so-called "axis of resistance" and get into the fight.

Fighting Israel is very much a pillar of state identity in Iran. The Iranian political establishment is set up on the principle of challenging the United States and freeing Palestinian lands occupied by Israel. Those things are ingrained in the Iranian state identity. So, if Iran doesn't act on this principle, there's a serious risk of undermining its own identity.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian ***PHOTO: PTI***

A delicate balancing act

Yet there are clearly serious risks to this type of direct attack by Iran.

Domestically, the Iranian political regime is suffering from a serious crisis of legitimacy. There have been numerous popular uprisings in Iran in recent years. These include the massive "Women, Life, Freedom" movement that erupted following the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody for allegedly not properly wearing her hijab.

There is also a major dissenting view in Iran that challenges the regime's anti-US and anti-Israel state identity and its commitment to perpetual conflict with both countries.

So, the authorities in Iran have been concerned that direct confrontation with Israel and the US would unleash these internal dissenting voices and seriously threaten the regime's survival. It's this existential threat that has stopped Iran from acting on its principles.

In addition, Iran has a new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, who belongs to the reformist camp and has an agenda of improving Iran's relations with the West. He has been talking about reviving the Iran nuclear deal with the international community, sending signals that Iran is prepared to talk with the Americans.

But the problem is the regional dynamics have completely changed since that deal was negotiated with the Obama administration in 2015. Iran has been a pariah state in recent years – and even more so since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began a year ago.

Since then, no Western country would deem it appropriate or politically expedient to engage in nuclear talks with Iran, with the aim of alleviating international sanctions on the regime. Not at a time when Iran is openly calling for the destruction of Israel, supporting Hezbollah and Hamas in their attacks on Israel, and now engaging in confrontations with Israel itself.

So the timing is awful for Pezeshkian's agenda of repairing the damage to Iran's global standing.

Ultimately, though, it's not the president who calls the shots in Iran – it is Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Supreme National Security Council who consider matters of war and peace and decide on the course of action. The supreme leader is also the head of state and appoints the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

So, the regime has been maintaining a delicate balance of these factors:

preserving Iran's state identity and what it stands for in the region, and the need to manage internal dissent and ensure its survival.

As such, it has become more important for Iran to emphasise its anti-American, anti-Israel state identity and perhaps deal with an acceptable level of risk coming from a rise in internal dissent.

Where things go from here

With its attack on Israel, Iran is also prepared for another risk – direct retaliation from Israel and all-out war breaking out.

The conflict in the region is really going according to Netanyahu's playbook. He has been advocating for hitting Iran and for the United States to target Iran. Now, Israel has the justification to retaliate against Iran and also drag the United States into the conflict.

Unfortunately, Iran is also now prepared to see the entire Persian Gulf get embroiled in the conflict because any retaliation by Israel and perhaps the United States would make US assets in the Persian Gulf, such as navy ships and commercial vessels, vulnerable to attacks by Iran or its allies. And that could have major implications for trade and security in the region.

This is way things are heading. Iran would know that hitting Israel would invite Israeli retaliation and that this retaliation would likely happen with US backing. It seems Iran is prepared to bear the costs of this. *—The Conversation*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

New study tracks migration history of elephants in India

A genetic study has charted the migration history of elephants in India from north to south, revealing multiple bottlenecks encountered along the way that threatened their existence and likely caused a "dilution of genetic diversity".

Genetic diversity is important for a resilience to disease and long-term survival, including an ability to adapt to environmental changes.

The findings can help shape the future of elephant species in India by informing conservation strategies, researchers from the National Centre for Biological Sciences and the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru, said.

The Asian elephant has been listed as 'Endangered' species on the IUCN Red List since 1986. The list was established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1964.

Elephants in India -- known to make up 60 per cent of the global Asian elephant population -- started migrating about 1,00,000 years ago, eventually settling in different parts of the country.

The researchers analysed 34 whole genome sequences, obtained from blood samples taken from wild elephants across the country's landscapes.

The analysis, published in the journal Current Biology, identified five genetically distinct populations, as opposed to previously reported three or four, "emphasising their antiquity and unique evolutionary histories", according to the authors.

Of the five distinct breeds, two are located in north and central India, and three in the south, separated by the Palghat and Shencottah Gaps or 'breaks' in the Western Ghats, they said.

The Palghat Gap lies between Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and Palakkad in Kerala, while the Shencottah Gap connects Tamil Nadu's Madurai with the district Kottayam, Kerala.

Further, the northern breeds were found to be more genetically diverse and have low inbreeding -- where creatures having very similar genetic material breed -- compared to the southern ones, two of which had low diversity and were inbred, they said.

Co-lead author Uma Ramakrishnan, a molecular ecologist and a professor at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, told PTI that the team observed a "dilution of diversity".

"Imagine an ink blot on a filter paper, dropped at the top right corner. The further we go from this, towards the bottom left, the less dark the ink is. Similarly, the diversity in southern western ghats is less than that in the north-east and north populations," she said.

Ramakrishnan added that the inbreeding in the southern populations suggested that "there has been either a bottleneck, or mating between relatives recently".

The researchers also found evidence of historical exploitation endured by the land mammals in the form of "bottlenecks". Wild elephants in India are known to be regularly exploited for military and domestic use, since they began to be tamed during Harappan times.

In this study, the samples from the populations in north India and those in the north of the Palghat Gap showed that both underwent a recent bottleneck around 1,500-1,000 years ago, followed by a recovery that started around 300-500 years ago.

Ramakrishnan said, "Many endangered species have been through bottlenecks in the recent past. The nature of this bottleneck affects the distribution of genetic variation and the ratio of good versus bad mutations."

Knowledge of such genetic nature can help inform biodiversity conservation efforts, she added.

"Such understanding can help predict population trends in the future for these populations. Further, understanding the distribution of variation across populations will help plan strategies for future gene flow, should it be necessary," Ramakrishnan said.

The researchers said the presence of five genetically distinct elephant breeds suggested that natural barriers may have kept them apart, allowing them to evolve separately.

Alternatively, it could also indicate an ancient distribution of the population, as elephants these days arguably roam more extensively, largely in search of habitats increasingly fragmented because of human interventions, they said. *—PTI*

Elephants in India, known to make up 60% of the global Asian elephant population, started migrating about 1,00,000 years ago ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Naxals use diwali crackers, incense sticks to attack CRPF camps

As the CRPF personnel took positions thinking it to be an attack by Naxals in the thickly forested area, soon the air was filled by staccato of gunfire and blasts by improvised rockets or barrel grenade launchers ***PHOTO: PTI***

Diwali crackers and incense sticks are the new improvised tools used by Maoists to attack security forces' camps in remote areas in various Left wing extremism-affected regions of the country, according to official sources.

This unique modus operandi of using incense sticks to burst crackers and "divert attention" of the camp troops to launch a swift rocket and gun fire attack was prominently noticed around the Pusuguppa camp of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Kothagudem district of Telangana on 25 September, the sources told PTI.

A senior officer undertaking anti-Naxal operations said, on that day around 6.30 pm as darkness started descending, the troops at the camp along the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border were alerted with sounds of blasts and subsequent emanating smoke just about 200 m from the boundary of their base.

As the CRPF personnel took positions thinking it to be an attack by Naxals in the thickly forested area, soon the air was filled by staccato of gunfire and blasts by improvised rockets or barrel grenade launchers (BGLs) from the hiding Maoist groups, the officer said.

The troops undertook retaliatory fire using their INSAS and AK series assault rifles even as a few bombs and grenades were launched.

The sounds and firing continued for about 45 minutes after which it was ascertained by the troops that the Naxals retreated. There was some damage to the camp fence as improvised rockets crashed near them but there was no casualty, a second officer based in Delhi said.

An inspection of the camp surroundings by the force personnel over the next two days led to the discovery of exploded Diwali crackers hanging on trees using ropes and burnt incense sticks that were used to blast them, the second officer said.

"There have earlier been a few incidents where such modus operandi was used to divert the attention of troops towards the blast sound and immediately attacking their camps with gun fire and crude rockets but these things were not conclusive as no evidence was found.

"The last month attack on the Pusuguppa CRPF camp has confirmed this new tact of Naxals as evidence was gathered by the troops and the bomb disposal teams," the first officer quoted above said.

> Attacks using crackers and incense sticks have specifically been reported from remote locations where the security forces, especially the CRPF, are opening new camps called forward operating bases

The incense sticks, according to anti-LWE operations experts, are being used as "timers" by the Naxals as they fire these near the crackers and take secure positions near the security camps by the time the crackers explode, he said.

The Maoists are trying to trick the troops through this modus operandi as they aim to confuse them with blasts and gun fire in the dark. They want to draw the troops out from the camps, the officer said.

Experts say as the Naxals are not in a position to undertake a face-to-face gun battle, they are relying in these "proxy" attack techniques including usage of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) beneath or near the tracks to wreak life taking attacks on the troops.

"Earlier Naxals used to get explosives by pilfering them from the mining sector but now using Diwali grade crackers and crude rockets are easy to prepare without getting detected.

"This is a new modus operandi. However, it does not look to be too dangerous. The forces are vigilant against these traps," a senior CRPF officer said.

Attacks using crackers and incense sticks have specifically been reported from remote locations where the security forces, especially the CRPF, are opening new camps called forward operating bases.

The force has created close to 40 such bases in Chhattisgarh over the last 3-4 years and is preparing about four more by this financial year as the toughest anti-Naxal operations combat remains concentrated in the southern region of the state called Bastar, that borders Odisha and Telangana. *—PTI*

Ceasefire out of question: Israeli Defence expert

I utterly condemn this attempt by the Iranian regime to harm innocent Israelis, to escalate this incredibly dangerous situation and push the region ever closer to the brink

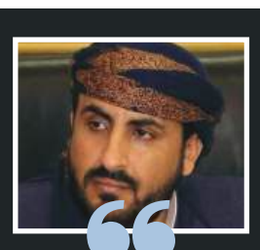
-Kier Starmer, UK Prime Minister

Iran is risking setting the entire region on fire this must be prevented at all costs. Hezbollah and Iran must immediately cease their attacks on Israel

-Olaf Scholz, German Chancellor

Australia condemns Iran's missile attack. This is an extremely dangerous escalation. We are monitoring the situation closely and encourage Australians in Israel to follow the advice of local authorities

-Anthony Albanese, Australia Prime Minister



Deterring the Zionist entity and confronting it is the only way to reign it in and prevent it from escalating its barbaric crime against the Lebanese and Palestinian people and the rest of the region

-Mohammed Abdulsalam, Spokesperson of Yemen's Houthis

We urge all sides to show restraint against the backdrop of the ongoing events, and of course, we condemn any actions that lead to the deaths of civilians

-Dmitry Peskov, Press Secy of the Russian Federation

China calls on the international community, especially major countries with influence, to play a constructive role and avoid further turmoil

-China Foreign Ministry

Israel says 2-state solution not happening anytime soon

TEL AVIV, 2 OCT

With the West Asia conflict opening up on multiple fronts, and Israel's focus shifting to fighting Hezbollah and Iran, Israeli defence expert, Brig Gen (Res) Yossi Kuperwasser, believes that ceasefire talks in Gaza are now on the backburner and the 'two-State solution' is not going to happen anytime soon. Brig Gen Kuperwasser is a senior researcher at the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs. He was the former head of the research division in IDF Military Intelligence. .

Kupperwasser highlighted that Israel's aim is to emphasise the need to bring Iran back to its "real size" for attaining any "realistic solution" in the conflict. "A realistic solution is that Hamas and all the Hamas is removed from power in Gaza, that there's a new state of affairs in Lebanon, where the Lebanese state goes back into being the owner of the monopoly of the use of force for its territory, which is not the case now," Kupperwasser said.

A barrage of missiles fired from Iran are seen over Jerusalem on Wednesday **PHOTO: ANADOLU**

Denmark police probe blasts near Israeli Embassy

Two blasts occurred near theIsraeli Embassy in Copenhagen at 3:20 am, Danish police said on Wednesday. "It is our preliminary assessment that they were caused by two hand grenades," police said. *—ANI/DW*

Syrian scribe killed in Israeli strike

Syria TV anchor Safaa Ahmad was killed morning in an Israeli airstrike on the Mezzeh dis-trict in Syria's capital, Damascus. State agency SANA said the strike killed three civilians, including Ah-mad, and wounded nine others. *—Courtesy, Arab News*

Israel asks people to evacuate 24 villages in Lebanon

DEIR AL-BALAH, 2 OCT

The Israeli military has warned people to evacuate another 24 villages across southern Lebanon. The warning on Wednesday came days after the military launched what it said were limited ground operations near the border to combat the Hezbollah militant group. The villages are in a UN-declared buffer zone established after Israel and Hezbollah fought their last war in 2006.

The Israeli military said one of its soldiers was killed in combat operations in Lebanon on Wednesday, marking the first loss since its forces crossed the border to target Hezbollah. *—PTI*

Israeli shelling hit an area in southern Lebanon as seen from northern Israel on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

AT LEAST 32 KILLED IN ISRAELI STRIKES IN SOUTHERN GAZA

DEIR-AL-BALAH, 2 OCT

Israeli strikes killed at least 32 people in southern Gaza overnight, mostly women and children, as the military launched ground operations in the hard-hit city of Khan Younis, Palestinian medical officials said on Wednesday.

Israel has continued to strike what it says are militant targets across Gaza nearly a year after Hamas' 7 October attack ignited the war, even as attention has shifted to Lebanon, where Israel has launched ground operations against Hezbollah, and to Iran, which launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel late Tuesday.

In a separate development, Hezbollah said its fighters clashed with Israeli troops in the Lebanese bor-der town of Odaisseh, forcing them to retreat. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli mili-tary or independent confirmation of the incident, which would mark the first ground combat since Is-raeli troops crossed the border this week. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Saleh al-Hams, head of the nursing department at the European Hospital, said dozens of dead and wounded people were brought to his facility and the Nasser Hospital starting at around 3 a.m. Some of the wounded were in critical condition, meaning the death toll could rise, he said. *—PTI*

Iranian attack appears to have been defeated: Joe Biden

WASHINGTON, 2 OCT

The Iranian missile attack on Israel appears to have been defeated and ineffective, US President Joe Biden said, hours after Tehran fired nearly 200 missiles at Israel.

The Israeli military reportedly said there were no news of injuries from the attack. Speaking to reporters at the White House, Biden said, "At my direction, the United States military actively supported the defence of Israel. We are still assessing the impact but, based on what we know, the attack appears to have been defeated and ineffective and this is a testament to Israeli military capability… (It is) also a testament to intensive planning the United States and Israel to anticipate and defend against a brazen attack."

"Make no mistake; the United States is fully supportive of Israel. And I just spent the morning and part of the afternoon in the situation room, meeting with my whole national security team…," he added.

Biden directed the US military to aid Israel's defence against Iranian attacks and shoot down missiles targeting the country, the White House said. While most of the missiles were destroyed before reaching their target, some did impact and cause minimal damage, the Pentagon Press Secretary Major Gen-eral Patrick S Ryder said.

Condemning the attack, Vice-President Kamala Harris said, "I condemn this attack unequivocally. I am clear-eyed -- Iran is a destabilising, dangerous force in the Middle East and today's attack on Israel only further demonstrates that fact." *—PTI*

Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut, Lebanon, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

US bomb from WW II explodes at Japanese airport

TOKYO, 2 OCT

An unexploded US bomb from World War II that had been buried at a Japanese airport exploded Wednesday, causing a large crater in a taxiway and the cancellation of more than 80 flights but no injuries, Japanese officials said. Land and Transport Ministry officials said there were no aircraft nearby when the bomb exploded at Miyazaki Airport in south-western Japan. *—PTI*

Doctor to plead guilty in Matthew Perry's death

LOS ANGELES, 2 OCT

One of two doctors charged in the investigation of the death of Matthew Perry is expected to plead guilty on Wednesday in a federal court in Los Angeles to conspiring to distribute the surgical anesthetic ketamine. Dr Mark Chavez, 54, of San Diego, signed a plea agreement with prosecutors in August and would be the third person to plead guilty in the aftermath of the "Friends" star's fatal overdose last year. *—PTI*

Thousands rescued after typhoon lashes Taiwan

KAOHSIUNG, 2 OCT

An approaching typhoon bringing strong winds and torrential rainfall to Taiwan killed one person and injured dozens of others over the past few days and led to the evacuation of thousands from low-lying or mountain-ous areas. At least 70 people were injured and one death died due to weather conditions attributed to Typhoon Krathon, Taiwan's fire department said Wednesday. One elderly man died after falling off a ladder while pruning tree branches in the eastern city of Hualien. The typhoon, packing maximum sustained winds of 173 kph and gusts of 209 kph. *—PTI*

45 dead, dozens missing as boats sink in Red Sea

DJIBOUTI, 2 OCT

Two vessels carrying migrants from Africa sank in the Red Sea off the coast of Djibouti, killing 45 people, the UN migration agency said on Tuesday.

The boats had departed from Yemen carrying 310 people, the International Organization for Migration said. Thousands of migrants from African, Middle Eastern and South Asian countries seeking a better life in Europe attempt irregular migration every year. Smugglers pack vessels full of desperate people willing to risk their lives to reach continental Europe.

The UN agency, which was assisting search and rescue efforts, said on the social media platform X that 32 survivors were rescued. Djibouti's coast guard said the tragedy struck some 150 metres off a beach near the northwest Khor Angar region. It said a joint rescue effort was under way, which began early on Monday. It said 115 survivors were rescued.

"We remain committed to finding the missing persons and ensuring the safety of the survivors," the agency said in a statement posted on social media, with images of white body bags. Tens of thousands of people seeking a better future leave from Africa and cross the Red Sea each year in order to reach Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states, in what humanitarian organisations have described as "one of the busiest and arguably most dangerous in the world". *—PTI/ Agencies*

Ukraine accuses Russia of executing 16 PoWs

KYIV, 2 OCT

Russian forces appear to have shot 16 Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in Donetsk Oblast, the largest recorded case of mass execution of surrendered soldiers on the battlefield, Ukraine's Prosecutor Gen-eral's Office said on 1 October.

Evidence of the execution appeared on social media earlier on 1 October. The POWs were reportedly killed after surrendering on the front line near Pokrovsk. The Prosecutor General's Office said it was verifying the material published online and investigating the circumstances around the case.

The execution of POWs is a "cynical and gross violation of the Geneva Conventions," the Prosecutor General's Office said. "This is the most massive known case of execution of Ukrainian POWs on the front line," Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said.

Russian soldiers attend combat training for assault units at an undisclosed location in Ukraine on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Ukrainian forces withdraw from Vuhledar

Ukrainian forces have withdrawn from the town of Vuhledar in Donetsk Oblast, the Khortytsia group of forces said on 2 October. "The higher command authorized a manoeuvre to withdraw units from Vuhledar in order to save personnel and military equipment, and take up a position for further opera-tions," it said in a statement.

- The PoWs were reportedly killed after surrendering on the front line near Pokrovsk. The Prosecutor General's Office said it was verifying the material published online and investigating the circumstances around the case

Ukraine's 72nd Mechanized Brigade has defended Vuhledar, key to Ukrainian defenses in the southern part of Donetsk Oblast, for nearly two years. Russian forces have been attempting to capture the town since the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022. *—Courtesy, Kyiv Independent*

'TRUMP MADE WORLD SECURE'

Walz slams Trump for backing Iran nuke deal

WASHINGTON, 2 OCT

Praising the steady leadership and calmness of Vice President Kamala Harris, her running mate Gover-nor Tim Walz has slammed the policies of the Republican presidential candidate claiming that Iran went closer to nuclear weapons because of Donald Trump.

Senator JD Vance, however, asserted that Trump consistently made the world more secure. These re-marks were made on Tuesday during the only vice-presidential debate between Walz and Vance in New York hosted by CBS News, hours after Iran fired at least 180 missiles into Israel as regionwide conflict grows.

During the debate, Walz also said that Trump is unfit to lead. "What we've seen out of Vice President Harris is steady leadership. We've seen a calmness that can draw on the coalitions to bring them to-gether. Understanding that our allies matter," Walz, who is the running mate of Harris with her being on the top of the Democratic presidential ticket in the November general elections.

Senator JD Vance greets Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Walz during the debate hosted by CBS News on Wednesday **PHOTO: X**

The US along with Israeli partners and coalition, was able to stop the incoming attack from Iran, he said. "But what's fundamental here is that steady leadership is going to matter. It's clear—and the world saw it on that debate stage a few weeks ago—a nearly 80-year-old Donald Trump talking about crowd sizes is not what we need at this moment. But it's not just that. It's those that were closest to Trump that understand how dangerous he is when the world is this dangerous," he said. *—PTI*

'Trump didn't lose 2020 polls'

JD Vance has refused to acknowledge that Donald Trump lost the 2020 elections, as he evaded a direct reply on whether he would seek to challenge this year's election results even if these were certified in every state.

Trump says no to '60 Minutes' talk

Donald Trump has declined to participate in an interview with "60 Minutes" for its election special, which will be against Kamala Harris. *—PTI*

California wildfires burn million acres of land

LOS ANGELES, 2 OCT

The total acres burned in California this year surpassed a million as spiking temperatures on Tuesday added to the challenges facing firefighters struggling to contain a stubborn blaze in the mountains northeast of Los Angeles that flared up over the weekend.

Evacuation orders were expanded again on Monday for remote communities northeast of Los Angeles as the Line Fire that has been burning for nearly a month spread over nearly 176 square kilometres of the San Bernardino Mountains and containment dropped from 83 per cent to 76 per cent.

The risk of wildfires increased across California as an autumn heatwave scorched much of the state. Some inland areas could see temperatures up to 20 degrees above average for this time of year, ac-cording to the National Weather Service.

San Francisco, where residents typically break out the sweaters in October, could hit 32 degrees Celsius, while triple digits were predicted for Sacramento. The weather service office in the state's capital urged residents to stay indoors during the heat of the day on Tuesday. Dry, hot winds in the northern part of the state prompted Pacific Gas & Electric to preemptively cut power to small clusters of customers in high-risk areas. The utility routinely stops electricity service in counties where weather conditions increase the probability of fires. *—PTI*

This comes as autumn heatwave scorches California **PHOTO: X**

War escalation may push logistics cost; disrupt oil, agri trade

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The escalation of conflict in the West Asian region is expected to push already high logistics costs besides hurting trade in sectors such as oil, electronics and agriculture, according to exporters.

They said that insurance costs for exports to the countries directly involved in the war could also go up, which will impact Indian exporters' working capital.

Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) stated that the conflict is already hurting India's trade with countries like Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon.

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said the Iran-Israel conflict has the potential to significantly impact world trade and the global economy in several ways.

"Iran is a key player in the oil market. Any escalation in conflict could disrupt oil supplies, leading to higher prices, which would impact global economies, especially those reliant on oil imports. Oil prices have already moved up by USD 4 per barrel," FIEO DG Ajay Sahai said.

Expressing concerns, he said increased tensions could destabilize the Middle East, affecting trade routes like the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the world's oil passes.

"Disruptions could lead to higher shipping costs and delays. Many global supply chains depend on the stability of the Middle East. Conflict could disrupt transportation and logistics, affecting industries ranging from electronics to agriculture," Sahai said.

Further, if the western world would put sanctions or trade restrictions, it would further complicate the global trade dynamics, he said adding "overall, the conflict could lead to increased volatility in global markets".

India's exports to Israel stood at USD 639 million during April-July this fiscal. It was USD 4.52 billion in 2023-24. Imports from Israel were USD 469.44 million during the first four months of this fiscal.

It was USD 2 billion in 2023-24.

India's exports to Iran stood at USD 538.57 million during April-July this fiscal. It was USD 1.22 billion in 2023-24. Imports from Iran were USD 140.69 million during the first four months of this fiscal. It was USD 625.14 million in 2023-24.

Similarly, the country's exports to Jordan stood at USD 228.56 million during April-July this fiscal. It was USD 1.46 billion in 2023-24. Imports from Jordan were USD 699.28 million during the first four months of this fiscal. It was USD 1.4 billion in 2023-24. *—PTI*

India's exports to Iran stood at USD 538.57 million during April-July this fiscal **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

BBF names Anup Gupta as Chairman

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Bombay Stock Exchange Brokers' Forum (BBF) on Wednesday said it has appointed Anup Gupta as the chairman, succeeding Kishor Kansagra. The appointment has been effected from 30 September, the Forum said in a statement. Gupta, who is a director of Sykes & Ray Equities (I) Ltd, brings extensive financial expertise, including M&A, corporate finance, and derivatives. The Forum represents over 650 securities broking firms in India and actively contributes to regulatory policy. It also engages globally through affiliations with international financial bodies and focuses on professional development and investor education. *—PTI*

Zydus gets USFDA nod for prostate cancer drug

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Zydus Lifesciences on Wednesday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to produce a generic prostate cancer treatment drug. The company has received tentative approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to manufacture Enzalutamide tablets (40 mg and 80 mg), the drug maker said in a regulatory filing. Enzalutamide tablets are androgen receptor inhibitors indicated for the treatment of patients with castration-resistant prostate cancer and metastatic castration-sensitive prostate cancer. The product would be manufactured at the Group's manufacturing site at SEZ, Ahmedabad. As per IQVIA MAT July 2024 data, Enzalutamide tablets (40 mg and 80 mg) had annual sales of USD 1,417.2 million in the US. The Zydus group now has 400 approvals and has so far filed over 465 Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDAs) since the commencement of the filing process in FY 2003-04, it said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Royal Enfield sales rise 11% to 86,978 units in Sept

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Motorcycle maker Royal Enfield on Wednesday said its total wholesales increased 11 per cent year-on-year to 86,978 units in September. The company had dispatched 78,580 units in September 2023. In the domestic market, dispatches increased 7 per cent year on year to 79,326 units from 74,261 units in the year-ago period, Royal Enfield said in a statement. Exports increased from 4,319 units in September last year to 7,652 units last month. "We have registered steady growth in the month of September owing to our recent launches. The 2024 Classic 350 has continued to solidify its iconic status and popularity among riders and has been performing well," Royal Enfield CEO B Govindarajan said. *—PTI*

Adani merges step-down subsidiaries with ANIL

TotalEnergies holds a 25 per cent equity stake in ANIL

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Adani group has merged two step-down subsidiaries with green hydrogen and wind turbine manufacturing firm Adani New Industries Ltd, according to a stock exchange filing on Wednesday.

"Adani Infrastructure Private Limited and Mundra Solar Technology Limited stands amalgamated with Adani New Industries Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the company," Adani Enterprises Ltd, the group's flagship firm said in the filing.

Adani Infrastructure and Developers operates as a real estate company, constructing and developing thermal and solar power projects as well as providing engineering, techno-commercial, project management and control, and commissioning services.

ANIL is reportedly setting up facilities to produce solar glass, aluminium frames **REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE**

Less than three years old Mundra Solar Technology is involved in production, collection and distribution of electricity.

Adani New Industries Ltd (ANIL) is a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd that undertakes low-carbon projects. It undertakes green hydrogen projects, manufacturing of wind turbines and solar modules batteries. It serves energy and utilities, transportation, logistics and incubation sectors worldwide.

According to a July note by CARE Ratings Ltd, Adani has an operational facility for manufacturing 4 GW of solar PV modules with backward integration capacity of 4 GW of solar PV cells and 2 GW of ingot and wafer, and the wind turbine generator (WTG) manufacturing facility under the wind segment.

ANIL is reportedly setting up facilities to produce solar glass, aluminium frames, and backsheets -- key parts for its existing solar cell and module manufacturing.

French energy giant TotalEnergies holds a 25 per cent equity stake in ANIL while AEL holds the remaining. *—PTI*

DESPITE INFLATION

RBI unlikely to cut rate in 9 Oct policy meeting

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to uphold the status quo on both policy rate and stance for the tenth consecutive time in its October policy meet, says a research report by the Bank of Baroda (BoB).

"The newly constituted MPC is likely to await more clarity on the evolution of the inflation trajectory before embarking on monetary easing path. While the near-term outlook on inflation is positive, the MPC's decision is likely to be guided by the long-term outlook of inflation and growth, as has been explicitly stated by the Governor," says BoB report.

Despite inflation falling below the apex bank's target of 4 per cent for the past two months, the policy rates will not change in the MPC meeting commencing on 7 October, as per BoB report.

The MPC committee will announce its decisions on the policy rate on 9 October.

It said that the volatility in food prices is likely to elicit a cautious approach from the RBI, a rate cut at this juncture is unlikely. An opportunity of a rate cut can only be seen in December policy, when the apex bank will become sure that inflation has moderated on a durable basis, it added.

However, the report further added that the outlook on food inflation is positive, supported by a normal monsoon a favourable outlook on food inflation is seen, food prices are expected to remain stable. *—ANI*

Crew excluding in-flight managers and executives will have to share rooms during layovers **REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE**

AI introduces new policy for cabin crew

MUMBAI, 2 OCT

Air India is introducing a revised policy for the cabin crew members of domestic and international flights, wherein certain sections of the members will have to share rooms during layovers, according to a source.

The revised policy will also be applicable for Air India Express, which has merged AIX Connect with itself.

Among other changes, the source in the know said the allowances for cabin crew of international flights will be increased from USD 75-125 bracket to USD 85-135 bracket.

"As part of that exercise, we have communicated the changes applicable to Air India employees. The revised compensation and benefits continue to be competitive and benchmarked to industry standards," the spokesperson told PTI in a statement.

Under the revised policy, cabin crew members, excluding in-flight managers and executives, will have to share rooms during layovers, the source said.

In-flight managers and executives are generally senior people with at least 8-9 years of experience.

While room sharing for cabin crew is already there at Air India Express and Vistara, this will be the first time such a practice will be introduced at the Tata Group-owned loss-making Air India. *—PTI*

Vistara flight services to have 'AI2' prefix, says Air India

Air India said flights operated with Vistara aircraft will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2' after the merger next month while Vistara's planes, crew and service will continue to operate as before. The Tata Group-owned full service carrier also emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post merger.

Anil Ambani's Reliance bags 1,270 MW works in Bhutan

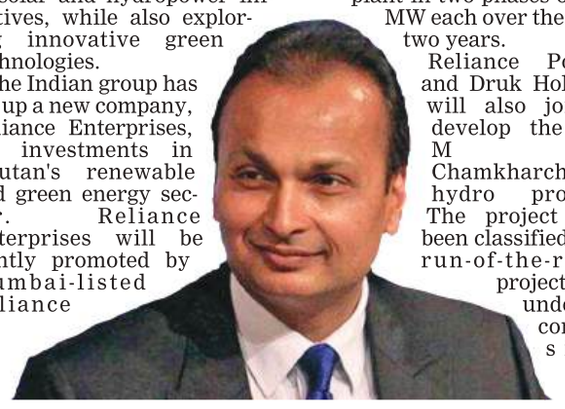
NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group on Wednesday announced its foray into Bhutan and said it will set up 1,270 megawatt solar and hydroelectric projects in the Himalayan Kingdom.

It "entered into a strategic partnership agreement with Druk Holding and Investments Ltd (DHI), the commercial and investment arm of the Royal Government of Bhutan, to undertake various initiatives aimed at bolstering investment in the renewable and green energy landscape of Bhutan," the group said in a statement.

The partnership between Reliance Group and Druk Holding will focus on green energy generation, specifically solar and hydropower initiatives, while also exploring innovative green technologies.

The Indian group has set up a new company, Reliance Enterprises, for investments in Bhutan's renewable and green energy sector. Reliance Enterprises will be jointly promoted by Mumbai-listed Reliance Infrastructure Ltd and Reliance Power Ltd.



It will set up a 500 MW solar plant in two phases of 250 MW each over the next two years.

Reliance Power and Druk Holding will also jointly develop the 770 MW Chamkharchhu-1 hydro project. The project has been classified as a run-of-the-river project and under a concession model in accordance with Bhutan government policy.

The 500 MW solar power plant will be set up in Gelephu Mindfulness City, Bhutan.

Once completed, the solar plant will be the largest of its kind, surpassing all existing solar installations in the country, and will produce clean, renewable energy to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Land for the project has been earmarked, and a technical team comprising experts from Reliance, Druk Holding, and external consultants is actively engaged in site assessments and technical studies, according to the statement.

—PTI

Threads users can now see fediverse engagements

WASHINGTON, 2 OCT

Instagram head Adam Mosseri announced on Tuesday that users who have connected their accounts to the fediverse, also known as the open social web, can now see who follows them and likes their posts from other fediverse servers, such as Mastodon and Pixelfed. Users will now have up to 15 minutes to make changes and edits to their posts on the social network. It comes as Threads has slowly been deepening its ties with the fediverse after first letting users connect their accounts to the fediverse back in March. *—Courtesy, TechCrunch*

India to become USD 1T economy by 2028, enabled by internet

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

With government's digital initiatives, India's financial ecosystem has undergone a paradigm shift over the last few years.

A recent report by Ask Capital says with enablers like deep internet penetration efficient and cheap 4G and 5G services along with government digital initiatives India is set to become a USD 1 trillion digital economy by 2028.

India has become a global example of real-time payments, benefiting from home grown technological innovations like UPI. India's digital transformation will be a game changer for the economic development.

Digitalisation of the Indian economy, along with the increasing use of smartphones in the past few years has propelled cashless transactions and online purchases.

According to the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), India's score on digital prowess has surpasses that of developed nations such as Japan, the United Kingdom and Germany in the aggregate level of digitalisation.

Government initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes have helped in universal access and enhanced financial inclusion in the country.

Increased mobile and broadband penetration will deepen financial inclusion and boost new digital services.

As on March 2024, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data suggests nearly 120 crore telecom subscribers in India. Total number of internet subscribers increased from 88.1 crore in March 2023 to 95.4 crore at the end of March 2024, close to half are from rural areas. Over 7.3 crore internet subscribers and over 7.7 crore broadband subscribers were added in last one year.

—ANI

SHATTERING RECORDS

Investors richer by ₹110L cr so far in 2024

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Investors' wealth surged by a whopping Rs 110.57 lakh crore so far this year, driven by a remarkable rally in the stock market, where the benchmark indices shattered many records.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms soared Rs 110,57,617.4 crore to Rs 4,74,86,463.65 crore (USD 5.67 trillion) so far this year. The market valuation of all listed firms at the BSE hit an all-time high of Rs 477.93 lakh crore on 27 September.

The BSE Sensex jumped 12,026.03 points or 16.64 per cent so far in 2024, giving handsome returns to investors. The benchmark scaled its all-time peak of 85,978.25 on 27 September, this year, breaching many milestones.

Analysts attributed the sharp rally in the markets to robust domestic liquidity along with strong fundamentals of the Indian economy.

Analysts attributed the sharp rally in the markets to robust domestic liquidity along with strong fundamentals of economy **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

Despite selling pressure from FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors), the Indian equity markets reached record highs, delivering solid gains, he said.

At the beginning of the year, the BSE Sensex was at 72,271.94 level and the benchmark gauge is now at 84,266.29.

The BSE midcap gauge has surged 12,645.24 points or 34.32 per cent so far this year, while the smallcap index soared 14,777.09 points or 34.62 per cent.

The 30-share BSE benchmark ended above the 83,000-level for the first time on 17 September. It ended above the historic 84,000-mark for first time on 20 September. The benchmark finished above the 85,000-level on 25 September.

In 2023, the BSE benchmark had jumped 11,399.52 points or 18.73 per cent.

Reliance Industries is the country's most valued firm with a market valuation of Rs 19,82,265.88 crore, followed by TCS (Rs 15,50,820.85 crore), HDFC Bank (Rs 13,16,818.45 crore), Bharti Airtel (Rs 9,67,295.41 crore) and ICICI Bank (Rs 8,98,320.22 crore) in the top five order. *—PTI*

Rajan against food price exclusion in inflation index

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Amid suggestions for excluding food inflation while setting benchmark interest rates, former RBI Governor **Raghuram Rajan** has said that he is against excluding food prices from headline inflation, as it would erode the 'great faith' of people in the central bank, which has been mandated by the government to keep inflation in check.

Rajan further said it is best that inflation target a basket which is what the consumer consumes because that affects the consumers perception of inflation and ultimately inflationary expectations.

"When I came into office, we were still targeting PPI (producer price index). Now that has no bearing to what the average consumer faces.

"So, when the RBI says inflation is low, look at PPI, but if the consumer is facing something very different, then they do not really believe that inflation is down," he told PTI.

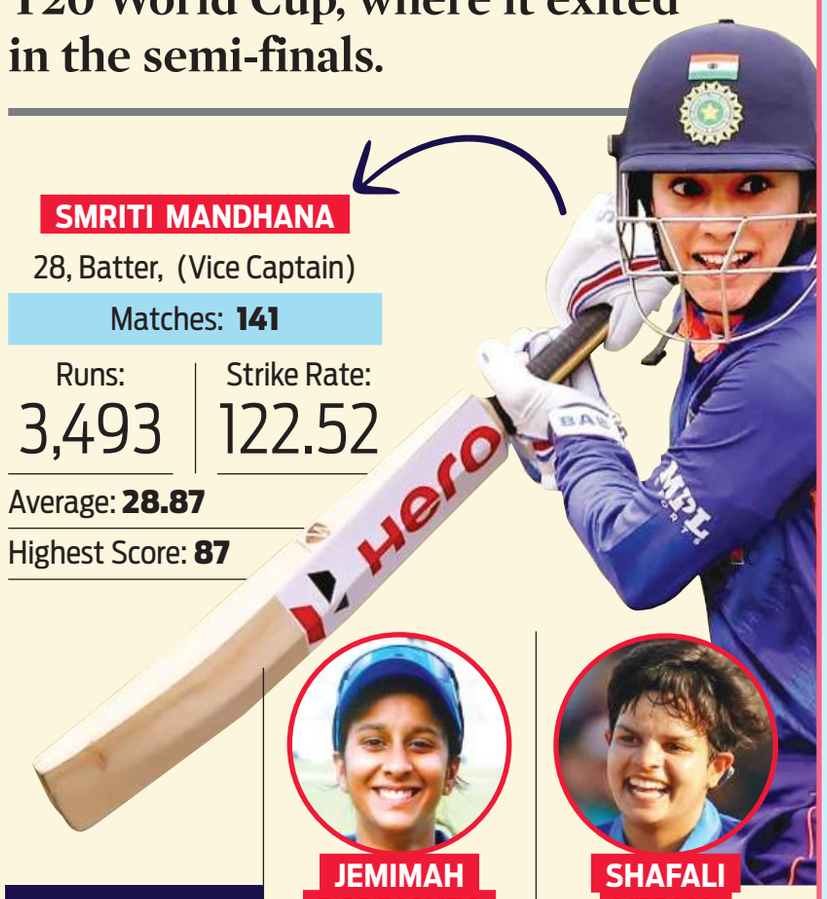
He was speaking at Economic Survey 2023-24 for excluding food inflation. "So, if you leave out some of the most important parts of inflation and tell them, inflation is under control, but food prices are going to the roof or something else is going up, which is not included in the inflation basket, then you know, they would not have great faith in the Reserve Bank," he said. *—PTI*

THE BIG STUFF

The Women in Blue aim to secure their first-ever senior ICC trophy at Women's T20 World Cup 2024, which kicks off today in Dubai. Their debut match is against the Kiwis. The 2020 edition's runners-up are placed in Group A, having qualified for the extravaganza due to their performance at the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup, where it exited in the semi-finals.

FULL SQUAD

Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajana Sajeevan.



KEY PLAYERS FROM INDIA TO WATCH OUT FOR

SMRITI MANDHANA

28, Batter, (Vice Captain)

Matches: **141**

Runs: 3,493 | Strike Rate: 122.52

Average: **28.87**

Highest Score: **87**

JEMIMAH RODRIGUES

24, Batter

Matches: **100**

Runs: 2,074

Strike Rate: **114.27**

Average: **30.50**

Highest Score: **76**

SHAFALI VERMA

20, Batter

Matches: **81**

Runs: 1,948

Strike Rate: **130.39**

Average: **25.63**

Highest Score: **81**

HARMANPREET KAUR

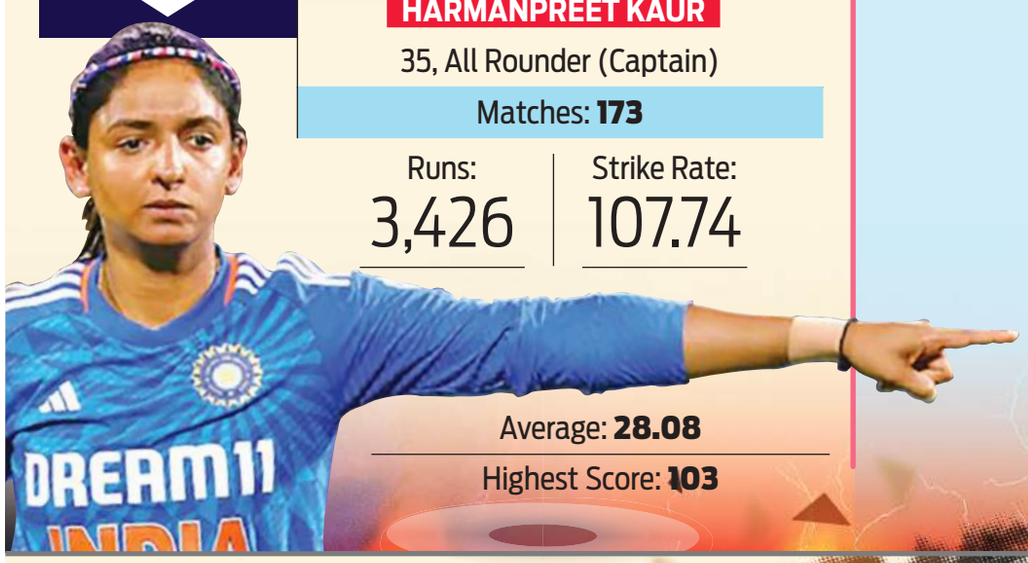
35, All Rounder (Captain)

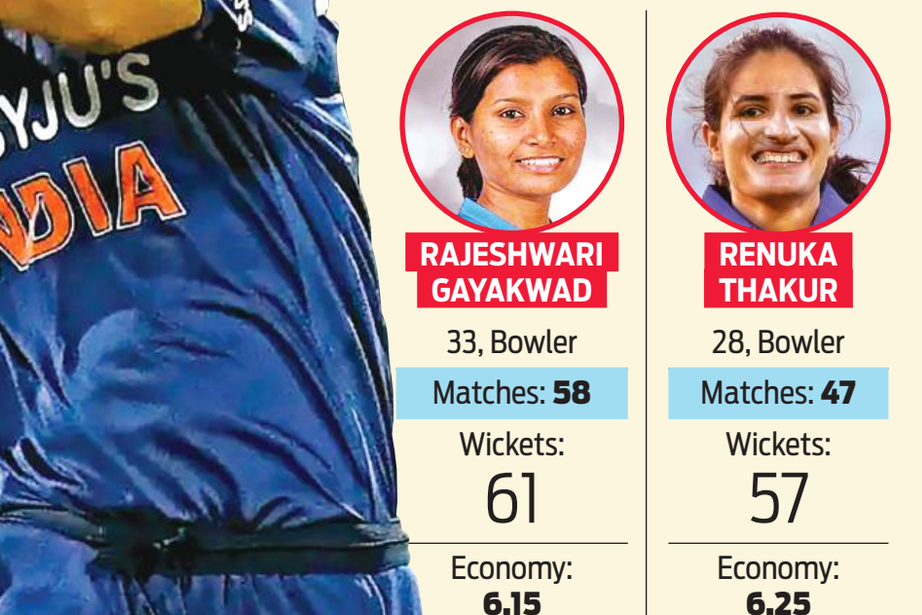
Matches: **173**

Runs: 3,426 | Strike Rate: 107.74

Average: **28.08**

Highest Score: **103**





RAJESHWARI GAYAKWAD

33, Bowler

Matches: **58**

Wickets: 61

Economy: **6.15**

BBM*: **3/9**

RENUKA THAKUR

28, Bowler

Matches: **47**

Wickets: 57

Economy: **6.25**

BBM: **5/15**

4 Wickets: **2**

*Best Bowling in Match

MEGHNA SINGH

30, Bowler

Matches: **9**

Wickets: 4

Economy: **8.16**

BBM: **1/6**

INDIA'S SCHEDULE

4 OCT:	vs	New Zealand
6 OCT:	vs	Pakistan
9 OCT:	vs	Sri Lanka
13 OCT:	vs	Australia

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE OVER LAST FIVE YEARS

2014	GROUP STAGE
2016	GROUP STAGE
2018	SEMI-FINALS
2020	RUNNERS-UP
2023	SEMI-FINALS

DEEPTI SHARMA

27, All Rounder

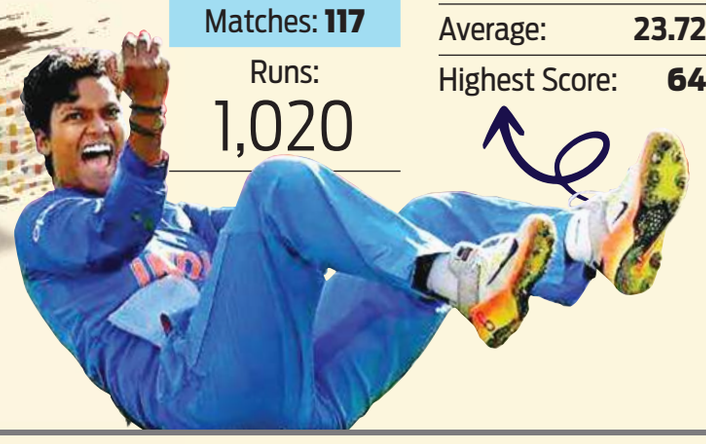
Matches: **117**

Runs: 1,020

Strike Rate: **104.29**

Average: **23.72**

Highest Score: **64**



STRENGTHS

All-rounders: The team has a strong group of all-rounders, including Harmanpreet, Sajana, Sobhana, and Deepti.

Spinners: In the UAE, the pitches are mostly spin-friendly; therefore, Deepti Sharma, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, and Asha Sobhana might become key factors for India. Deepti has been in good touch since 2017 and could be important in the final overs.

WEAKNESSES

Pace attack: India lacks an enforcer like the now-retired Jhulan Goswami. Renuka Singh Thakur's form may not be enough to instill confidence, as she averaged 43.3 runs per wicket in the 2024 season.

Dependency on top orders: India's batting lineup is dependent on the top order, which is in top-notch form, but the lower middle order is not much experienced, which might bring a problem in death overs.

RESEARCH: SAPTARSHI, ANAMIKA HOLLA DESIGN: G VISHWANATHA

Kumar, Enaan shine as India U-19 beat Aus U-19

CHENNAI, 2 OCT

R Nikhil Kumar showed excellent temperament on way to an unbeaten half-century under pressure and guided India U-19 to a nervy two-wicket win over Australia U-19 on the third day of the first unofficial Test here on Wednesday. Coming in at number seven, the left-handed batter Kumar remained not out on 55 off 71 balls as India emerged winners in the final hour of the day's play. This was after leg-spinner Mohamed Enaan did the spadework and returned excellent figures of 6/79 to bowl out Australia for 214 in their second innings. Australia were 110 for four overnight. Set a target of 212, a tricky proposition on this surface, India were dealt a massive blow straightaway as Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who flayed the Australian attack to all parts of Chepauk during his stunning 62-ball 104 in the first innings, fell for just one run in the second over. *—PTI*

Inaugural Kho Kho WC in India to be held next year

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The first edition of the Kho Kho World Cup will be held in India next year and will feature 16 men's and women's teams from 24 countries and six continents. Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) made the announcement on Wednesday. "Kho Kho has its roots in India and this World Cup will highlight the rich cultural heritage and competitive spirit of the sport. Today, the sport that started in the mud and has gone to the mat now has a global presence with 54 countries playing the sport across the world," KKFI said. "Our ultimate goal is to see Kho Kho recognied as an Olympic sport by 2032 and this World Cup is the first step towards that dream," said KKFI president Sudhanshu Mittal. *—PTI*

India enter quarters of Junior badminton C'ship

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

India successfully quelled a tough challenge from Turkey in their last Group E clash 110-99 to top the group and secure a quarterfinals berth in the BWF World Junior Mixed Team Championships in Nanchang, China on Wednesday. Badminton World Federation (BWF) has introduced the relay scoring system for the first time in the world junior mixed team championships in which the winning team has to reach 110 points in 10 matches to clinch the tie. India, who had comfortably beaten Peru, Azerbaijan and Mauritius in their earlier group games, had an indifferent start as Tushar Suveer conceded the advantage against Mehmet Can Toremis as he lost the first singles 7-11. N Srinidhi and U Reshika then stepped up to put India ahead 22-18 and the team then maintained that advantage through out the tie despite Toremis putting pressure on them in singles and doubles as well. India will face Indonesia in the quarterfinals. *—PTI*

Sir Ferguson tells ManU who should replace Ten Hag

LONDON, 2 OCT

Sir Alex Ferguson is an admirer of Max Allegri and would back him as the next Manchester United boss, according to reports in Italy. It is only six games into the season but there is talk of a change in the dugout at Old Trafford after a poor start to the campaign, which has already seen the Red Devils lose on three occasions. Their latest reverse at the hands of Tottenham has seen the pressure ramp up on Erik ten Hag. The Dutchman was kept on in the summer despite a poor campaign but already there is noise surrounding his potential departure. If he is to get the boot then Allegri is likely to be among the frontrunners to assume the role - especially as he is out of work. *—Courtesy, Mirror*

You can't make any mistakes against Aussies: Mandhana

India to face Australia on 13 October in Group A clash

DUBAI, 2 OCT

There are no shortcuts to beating Australia and every team has to give its best if it aspires to overcome the six-time world champions, said India Vice-Captain Smriti Mandhana ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup which begins here on Thursday. Australia's dominance in the global showpiece has been unrivalled with the team winning the last three editions of the tournament.

With charismatic former skipper Meg Lanning calling it a day following the victory in South Africa about 18 months ago, Alyssa Healy has taken over the captaincy as Australia aim to maintain their dominance in global events.

"Every game in the World Cup is important, and you have to give your 100 per cent in each one. New Zealand and Sri Lanka are strong teams, but with Australia, you know you can't afford to make mistakes," said Mandhana as India gear up to take on New Zealand in a Group A match here on Friday.

"You have to bring your best game on that particular day to get the better of them. There's always excitement when facing Australia because they're such a good team, and beating them is a great challenge," added the India vice-captain.

India lost to Australia in 2020 final and 2023 semi-final of T20 World Cup *PHOTO: ANI*

She added that the clash against Pakistan always brings out a lot of passionate response from the players. The arch-rival will lock horns here on 6 October.

"I think the India-Pakistan rivalry is more about the emotions of the fans than anything else. It's not like the players don't talk to each other; it's the emotions from both nations that make it so intense," Mandhana said.

"For me, every World Cup match is special, and we put the same amount of effort into each game. But there's definitely a lot of emotion attached to the India-Pakistan games," said the veteran of 141 T20Is.

Mandhana said that playing Pakistan in the afternoon heat of Dubai would be challenge and that her team had a couple of sessions lined up to acclimatise to the conditions. *—PTI*

Today's match

- Bangladesh vs Scotland Time: 3.30 pm
- Pakistan vs Sri Lanka Time: 7.30 pm

ICC WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP BANGLADESH 2024

JAISWAL JUMPS TO NO. 3

Bumrah regains top spot in ICC Test rankings

DUBAI, 2 OCT

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah is back at the summit of the ICC Test bowling rankings following his match haul of six wickets in the second Test against Bangladesh in Kanpur.

The 30-year-old replaced his India team-mate Ravichandran Ashwin - Player of the Series against Bangladesh - at the top of the chart. Spinner Ravindra Jadeja maintained his sixth place, while fellow spinner Kuldeep Yadav stayed in 16th.

In batting, Player of the Match from the Kanpur Test, Yashasvi Jaiswal, moved to a career-high third position after just 11 Tests. Jaiswal played scintillating knocks of 72 and 51 and helped India win the rain-marred match by seven wickets. With 792 rating points, the 22-year-old is behind second-placed Kane Williamson (829) and Joe Root (899). Also, veteran Indian batter Virat Kohli is back in the top 10, gaining six places to rise to the sixth position after knocks of 47 and 29 in Kanpur. Rishabh Pant, too, remained in the top 10, dropping three spots to ninth, with skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill on 15th and 16th, respectively.

Jasprit Bumrah *PHOTO: ANI*

As for the all-rounders, there has been no significant change in the rankings, with Jadeja holding the top spot, followed by Ashwin at second and Axar Patel at seventh. In team rankings, India were in the second spot with 120 rating points, separated from leader Australia by four points, while England remained in the third place with 108 points. *—PTI*

Dortmund scores 7 while Barca, Man City claim their first win

LONDON, 2 OCT

Karim Adeyemi starred as Borussia Dortmund ran riot against Celtic while Barcelona and Manchester City claimed their first wins in the restructured Champions League.

Adeyemi scored a first-half hat trick as Dortmund routed Celtic 7-1 at home. It was the second big win from a German team in the competition after Bayern Munich's 9-2 bashing of Dinamo Zagreb in the first matchday.

Robert Lewandowski got Barcelona off the mark as the Spanish giant eased to a 5-0 home win over Swiss team Young Boys, while his former teammate Ilkay Gündogan got City off to a 4-0 win at Slovan Bratislava. Erling Haaland scored his 42nd goal in his 41st Champions League game.

City was held 0-0 by Inter Milan in their opening game, while Barca responded to its 2-1 loss at Monaco, the team's first defeat under new coach Hansi Flick. Mikel Arteta's Arsenal outclassed his former team Paris Saint-Germain in a 2-0 win with Kai Havertz and Bukayo Saka scoring in the first half for the Gunners. PSG coach Luis Enrique's gamble on leaving Ousmane Dembélé out did not pay off.

Karim Adeyemi *PHOTO: @KARIM_ADEYEMI*

Arteta enjoyed a successful 18-month loan spell at PSG while still he was still a teenager at Barcelona. Dortmund fans cry foulThough the Dortmund team appears to have adapted to the new competition format very well — last season's beaten finalist has 10 goals from two games after starting with a 3-0 win over Club Brugge — its fans made their opposition to the reforms clear with a huge tifo slamming UEFA. *—PTI*

English League Cup: Newcastle wins rearranged match

NEWCASTLE, 2 OCT

Newcastle set up a fourth-round match against Chelsea in the English League Cup by beating fourth-tier AFC Wimbledon 1-0.

Fabian Schar's coolly taken penalty in first-half stoppage time earned Newcastle a victory that was significantly more comfortable than the scoreline suggested. The game was played a week after the third-round fixture was scheduled to take place. It had to be rearranged — and played at Newcastle's St. James' Park — after flooding caused severe damage to the pitch at Wimbledon's Cherry Red Records Stadium. Newcastle manager Eddie Howe made eight changes to the team which started Saturday's 1-1 draw with Manchester City in the Premier League. *—PTI*

A THRILLER

Alcaraz clinches China Open tilte

Carlos Alcaraz poses for a photograph after winning the China Open on Wednesday *PHOTO: X/@CARLOSALCARAZ*

BEIJING, 2 OCT

Carlos Alcaraz won seven straight points in the decisive tiebreaker to beat top-ranked Jannik Sinner 6-7 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3) and win the China Open on Wednesday, extending his recent mastery over his biggest rival.

The third-ranked Alcaraz has now won all three of his meetings with Sinner this year, having also come out on top in semifinals at Indian Wells and the French Open. Alcaraz also ended Sinner's winning streak at 14 matches and denied the Italian three straight titles.

Sinner, who was the defending champion in Beijing, had to refocus after the World Anti-Doping Agency announced on Saturday that it was appealing a decision to clear him of wrongdoing following two positive steroid tests. Alcaraz wasted a 5-2 lead in the first set and also let Sinner get back in the third after leading 4-2 before eventually edging it out after also falling behind 3-0 in the final-set tiebreaker. *—PTI*

Nagal crashes out in first round of Shanghai Masters

SHANGHAI, 2 OCT

Indian tennis ace Sumit Nagal's campaign in the Shanghai Masters ended in a first-round exit after he suffered a 6-3, 6-3 defeat to China's Wu Yibing here on Wednesday.

The 27-year-old, who has been in the news recently due to his dispute with the All India Tennis Association (AITA) regarding his participation in the Davis Cup fixture against Sweden, went down in straight sets leading to his second straight first-round elimination. Nagal, who had been battling a back injury, was accused of demanding an annual fee of USD 50,000 by the AITA to represent India in the Davis Cup tie but the country's top singles player defended himself" for athletes across the world to be paid for their services. *—PTI*

Tim Southee quits New Zealand captaincy

AUCKLAND, 2 OCT

Tim Southee has stepped down from New Zealand captaincy ahead of the three-Test series against India and Tom Latham has been appointed in the veteran pacer's place.

Southee captained New Zealand in 14 Tests in which the Kiwis won six, lost six and drew two.

"I've always tried to put the team first throughout my career and I believe this decision is the best for the team," said Southee in a New Zealand Cricket statement.

"I believe the way I can best serve the team moving forward is focusing on my performances on the field and getting back to my best, to continue taking wickets and helping New Zealand win Test matches." The 35-year-old right-arm pacer has so far played 102 Tests alongside 161 ODIs and 126 T20Is. With 382 wickets, he is the second-highest wicket-taker for the Kiwis after legendary Richard Hadlee (431).

Tim Southee *PHOTO: PTI*

"I will, as I've always done, continue to support my teammates, especially the exciting young bowlers making their way on the international stage. "He knows I'll be there to support him on his journey, as he has done for me over the years," said Southee.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said Southee took the decision in the best interests of the team. "He's been a great servant of New Zealand Cricket over nearly 17 years playing on the international stage, and I'd like to acknowledge his humility in stepping down from the role as Test captain. *—PTI*

Gave enough times to trust my judgement: Rohit

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Rohit Sharma believes that he has played enough cricket to trust his own judgements, like he did in what will be seen as a potentially grammar changing Test match against Bangladesh, which India won by seven wickets despite the game losing more than 220 overs due to inclement weather.

After complete washout on day two and three, the Indian team scored at an unprecedented eight runs plus per over, to set it up nicely with a total of only 173.2 overs needed for a result.

"I have been (out) there enough to trust my judgements on what I do," Rohit told BCCI.TV after India completed a 2-0 sweep of Bangladesh. Rohit said that while he is open to suggestions, the final call is his and he completely trusts his own gut feeling. *—PTI*

Top world chess players set to compete in GCL in London

LONDON, 2 OCT

Several of the world's strongest chess players will vie for top honours when the six-team Tech Mahindra Global Chess League, the only professional sports league where men and women compete together, commences here on Thursday.

A joint venture between the Indian tech giant and the international chess federation (FIDE), the league will see the likes of five-time world champion and current world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, former world champion Viswanathan Anand, world No. 2 Hikaru Nakamura, and one of the youngest players in the chess elite, 21-year-old Alireza Firouzja compete for their respective franchises in the event.

Besides, former women's world champions Hou Yifan, Alexandra Kosteniuk, Tan Zhongyi, and other leading Grandmasters are among the 36 players participating in the second edition of the league. Reigning champions, Triveni Continental Kings had clinched the title in Dubai last year with a dramatic last-minute win over the Ganges Grandmasters.

Viswanathan Anand *PHOTO: PTI*

- A joint venture between the Indian tech giant and FIDE, the league will see the likes of five-time world champion and current world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, former world champion Viswanathan Anand

The six teams competing in the London edition are Alpine SG Pipers (led by Magnus Carlsen), Ganges Grandmasters (Viswanathan Anand), upGrad Mumba Masters (Maxime Vachier-Lagrave), PBG Alaskan Knights (Anish Giri), Triveni Continental Kings (Alireza Firouzja) and American Gambits (Hikaru Nakamura).

The teams will compete in a double round-robin format. In contrast to traditional chess tournaments, where each team has an equal number of players playing with black or white pieces, here, the entire team will play with one colour for the duration of a match and switch in the rematch. *—PTI*

PCB IN SOUP

Babar steps down as Pak white-ball captain

KARACHI, 2 OCT

Babar Azam has tendered his resignation for the second time as Pakistan's captain with Mohammad Rizwan likely to replace him in limited-overs formats later this month.

Babar released a statement on X around midnight on Wednesday announcing he had informed the Pakistan Cricket Board and team management about his desire to quit sometime last month.

While Babar did not state when he had informed the board and team management about his decision to quit, the 29-year-old said he wanted to focus on his batting while shedding off the workload as a skipper.

Babar Azam *PHOTO: PTI*

"I'm sharing some news with you today. I have decided to resign as captain of the Pakistan men's cricket team, effective as of my notification to the PCB and Team Management last month," Babar wrote.

"It's been an honour to lead this team, but it's time for me to step down and focus on my playing role," he added.

Babar had quit Pakistan captaincy role after their dismal show in the ODI World Cup in India 2023 but he was reinstated as the skipper in white-ball formats in March this year.

However, his second stint had no change in fortunes for the team and Babar as the leader, as Pakistan performed abysmally in the T20 World Cup in the Americas in June, losing to USA and India and failing to make it to Super Eight stage.

Babar said captaincy had been a "rewarding experience" but also added a "significant workload" for him. "By stepping down, I will gain clarity moving forward and focus more energy on my game and personal growth." "I'm grateful for your unwavering support and belief in me. Your enthusiasm has meant the world to me. I'm proud of what we've achieved together and excited to continue contributing to the team as a player," he added. *—PTI*

Irani Cup: Sarfaraz smashes double ton

LUCKNOW, 2 OCT

The legend of Sarfaraz Khan as a domestic doyen is growing from strength to strength as his authoritative double hundred for Mumbai not only put Rest of India under immediate pressure in the ongoing Irani Cup but will also keep the seasoned KL Rahul on toes when the Indian team embarks on the Test tour of Australia next month.

Sarfaraz (221 batting, 276 balls) became the first ever cricketer to score an Irani Cup double hundred for Mumbai, with the 42-time champions reaching 536 for 9 at the end of the second day. Wasim Jaffer (Vidarbha), Ravi Shastri, Praveen Amre and Yashasvi Jaiswal (all for Rest of India) are double centurions in the Irani Cup. It has been a tough week for Sarfaraz as his younger brother Musheer, who was also supposed to play the game, was ruled out of competitive cricket for 16 weeks after a road accident. If his brother and father Naushad's car accident had perturbed him, it didn't seem so in his batting as he went hammer and tongs at the Rest of India bowling attack. *—PTI*